

COUNTRY HOUSES.

But ~~how~~ the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Or probably a sermon.

—

Burns.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1832.

E. BENSLY, PRINTER, ANDOVER.

COUNTRY HOUSES.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTMAS GAMBOLS.

'A merry Christmas to you, my masters.'—*Bellman's verses.*

"I wonder what people can mean by wishing one a *merry Christmas*," said Mr. Vernon, as he walked from the drawing room window, where he had been watching the flakes of snow, as they fell; "I know nothing that Christmas brings but frost and snow, that puts an end to hunting; and long bills, one has no money to pay. For my part, I make it a rule never to

open a letter from Christmas till February, that I may not encounter a tender epistle from my taylor, or boot maker, with “hard times,” “a large family,” “heavy payment to make next week,” when one has not a shilling in one’s banker’s hands ; and the rascals are only making up a purse for Brighton, instead of coats or boots for their customers : and of all this misery, stupid souls wish you *joy* ! Is not it so Ma’am ?” addressing his mother, Lady Vernon, who was deeply engaged, writing tickets, for clothing for the poor.

“ Indeed, my dear Frederic, you forget that Christmas is joyful in a religious point of view : it is the season which opened the gates of everlasting life to mankind, and on that account it calls on those who have affluence to open their hearts and houses towards those who feel the temporary evils of cold and poverty, which are those only we have the power to alleviate ; the good old times are gone by when open house was kept, perhaps it is better for the poor to have more permanent comforts than beef and ale given them, yet I own I regret they cannot have both : it must be a long purse that can clothe and feed also.”

“ Oh, my dear Ma’am, pray give as many blankets

and petticoats as you please ; make all the poor in the parish warm without, and within too, if you like it ; only don't expect me to be *merry* over their flannel waist-coats and worsted stockings. I am sure if one had ever so great an inclination to mirth, the Christmas parties, of old *fogramities*, collected in *this* house, would put even Comus to flight. We do nothing here, but what the king of Prussia's visitors at Potsdam did, conjugate the verb *ennuyée* ; I am ready to go through all its tenses, simple, compound and reflected."

"That must be a little your own fault, Frederic," replied Lady Vernon, "for I have no idea how people of education and talents can be so tired of themselves, when they have so much power of employment, and employment often brings amusement."

"I suppose then Ma'am, you would have me write a book, or turn an ode of Horace into English verse, because I had not enough of that agreeable employment at school and college : no ! believe me, those old fellows at Oxford take a pretty effectual way of making one hate the sight of the classics, by the nervous fever they give one at their examinations. Whatever I may do bye and bye, I must have at least ten years to for-

get that, before I can open Homer or Horace again. By the way though ! who is it we are to have here this year, to *make believe*, as the children say, that we are *merry* at Christmas ? I must know what fare I am to have, or rather who is to cut up *with* all the beef and mutton, hares and pheasants, collected in the larder, and so disgustingly exposed to view when one passes near the offices, before I can determine whether I shall stay here, or go with George Neville to Brighton ; though, to own the truth, the former would best suit my pocket and my stud too, for Judy is as lame as a tree ; I have blistered and turned out Flibberty-gibbet ; and I don't believe the brown horse can go the journey alone."

" When you have finished your soliloquy, or rather thought aloud for the edification of the rest of the family," said Lady Vernon, " I am ready to answer your question, if you really wish for an answer, though perhaps you have only been killing your own time, and interrupting mine. We expect Mr. and Lady Lucy Latour, and their two daughters."

" Precious souls ! Duly primed I suppose, by my Lady, to set their caps at me."

COUNTRY HOUSES.

“Don’t interrupt me, for I am in haste, — Mrs. Beaumont and Miss Phillips.”

“Bad enough!”

“Major Mac Venom: will he please you better?”

“Yes, if he is in a tolerably good humour, and has neither bile nor gout about him.”

“Your Father has asked General Dorozenski, who, with a Polish Count, is making a tour of the Manufacturing district, to take us in their way; but they are uncertain as to time.”

“Oh, pretty well! Mac Venom is a regular humbug, he will make something of the Russian bear, if the Pole is impracticable.”

“Sir Thomas asked him on purpose to explain what they had been seeing, as he is so great a mechanist, and some young men have been asked also, but I don’t exactly recollect who comes; and I had forgot Mrs. Elenor Latour and Miss Grey.”

“A fine piece of buckram good Aunt Elenor!” but as she brings her pretty black-eyed niece, I forgive having her grave person into the bargain. “I think, Ma’am, I shall *not* go to Brighton, so you must not reckon on my rooms for any one; I may get on with these people,

at least *tolerate* them, especially little Louisa Grey ; one can venture to talk to that girl without any danger of being taken in ; she has no father or brother at her heels, to ask you what you mean ? or, what is a thousand times worse, a managing mother, to watch looks, and give her daughters their cue, when to look demure, when to encourage attentions, and when to accept them ; two women's heads laid together will beat any man's ; and at last they come on you with a *coup de main*—of honor, and my daughter's happiness ; till you are caught in such a net, Merlin himself could not break the spell ; and, without caring one farthing for the girl, one gets tied to her, and her affection for life ; and Mamma piques herself on her own *excellent management* ! But with Louisa Grey all is safe, she is not one of your artificial, come out, London girls, who have run two or three years over the course till one is tired of the sight of them, and their waltzing, quadrilling and gallopading ; she is so new and refreshing, and so unsophisticated, one may try a thousand experiments on her credulity, without any danger of detection. If she had forty thousand pounds in her pocket, I might be in some danger of falling in love ; but, thank God ! I have not a very ten-

der heart, and, without a good lot of money, Hebe herself would have no charms for me. I shall like, too, to pique these *all accomplished* Miss Latours, who will keep hawks' eyes on their portionless and talentless cousin."

During this, Lady Vernon had been too much occupied sorting her tickets to attend much to her son's observations ; though she was very fond of him, she could not but see that his better sense, and the promise his early years had given, were obscured by a sort of fastidious taste, and a determination never to be pleased with any thing ; but she knew the real and native worth of his character, and trusted a few years would dissipate this cloud ; and she thought the less notice was taken of it the better. He had a more attentive listener in his sister, who had a great affection for Louisa Grey ; and this had induced him to make his thoughts so readily known, feeling sure that his sister would not fail to tell her friend that whatever her brother's attentions might be, they *meant nothing*.

"Really, Frederic," said she, "if that is your plan of amusement, I must fairly tell you I shall do my best to spoil your sport ; do as you please with the Miss Latour's, they have had two winters at Paris, besides

London, Rome and Spa, if they are not your match, I cannot help it; they have had opportunities enough of knowing the world; but for my simple minded, open hearted, friend Louisa Grey, I really shall feel bound to protect her from being made a plaything for any man, even if that man is *my brother*."

"Really, Emily, you are like my mother, you take every thing *au pied de la lettre*; nothing is farther from my intentions than having any *affaire de cœur*, I simply want to be *amused*, I don't care how, or with whom; I would go with Ellis to Paris, but it does not just now suit my finances: one never can tell there, but one may be drawn in by some smiling French syren, or some bowing Count, to play *écarté*, and that is always a losing game; and Melton is just now as heavy an expense as I can bear; and if this confounded frost, which seems as if it would last till Mid-summer, should break, I shall lose at least three days in getting from Paris to Melton; and if Judy and the brown horse are not fit to ride to cover, this long frost will make horses cheap. If I stay *here*, I must have something of interest and excitement, no matter what."

"Well then, we understand each other, Frederic,

whilst you keep on safe ground, I will not interfere; but, when I see you getting into mischief, I shall counteract you, depend upon it."

Somebody has compared, and not maptly, a country house when a large party is arriving, to the Bull and Mouth inn. Every body intends to get there just in time to dress for dinner: when there are ladies, a quarter of an hour more is necessary for unpacking; though indeed the single men, having distant quarters, a few minutes extra are required by them to find out No. 3, and No. 5, and carry the carpet bags and portmanteaus into their proper rooms.

Before Lady Lucy Latour's carriage was relieved from its double imperial, or half the thousand and one small parcels were carried up stairs, Mr. Latour came in with four smoking horses, from Lord Manton's, where he had been on a shooting party. In an opposite direction, through the park, came Mrs. Beaumont with her own greys; Mr. Latour's hacks tried to get the whip hand, but the driver of Mrs. Beaumont's leaders knew his own place too well, and gained it, nearly at the expense of both the carriages. Mr. Latour was well aware of the time it takes to unpack a

Lady's carriage of all its work-boxes and dressing-cases ; and, perceiving the post boys would have a squabble, he made the best of it, jumping out of his carriage, left them to settle it, and offer'd his arm to Mrs. Beaumont into the house ; she was excessively *shocked*, though she looked prodigiously *pleased*, that her postilion should have been so impertinent, he would, she was afraid, always do so ; but he was such a faithful creature, had lived so long with her, and was so careful of his horses ; and, excepting on such occasions, so civil, she felt obliged to over-look, and apologize for it. In short, it was a *lucky* incident for her, it was told to every fresh person she met, and with variations was even resumed at dinner, and again in the evening, as it reminded her of *so many* such *provoking* occurrences, that had happened to *her* carriage, and horses, and gave her an opportunity of telling, though she was really ashamed to make the acknowledgment, of the enormous price she gave for her horses, but it was so difficult to get a good match, and she must own it was her *folly* to wish to have the most complete set out in the country, *coûte qui coûte*.

Her arrival was followed by that of Arthur Nugent,

a nephew of Lady Vernon's, who came more humbly ; having been set down on the turnpike road by the Cambridge coach ; he was followed, on foot, by his servant, carrying his luggage. There were other arrivals—of Mrs. Elenor Latour, and Miss Grey, and single men ; but the sound of the first dinner bell sent all parties to their respective rooms ; and whilst they are employed with the important duties of the toilette, we will take leave to give our readers a slight sketch of some of the company they are to meet at dinner.

Mr. and Lady Lucy Latour had been one of the handsomest couples ever united at St. George's, and they were both equally desirous to retain their pretensions. Lady Lucy was a quiet person, content to look well, be well dressed, and have her *écarté* ; her maternal anxiety was bounded to having her daughters *admired* ; and she never doubted they could fail of being so by any person of true fashion or taste ; and it must be owned she had generally reason to be in every point contented.

Mr. Latour was a highly polished, and what has been called a *fine* man, not of *la vieille cour*, when bag wigs and brocaded waistcoats were in fashion ; but something of a later date, the Chesterfield school,

with the ease of a foreigner, and something of the modern negligence added to it. From having lived much abroad, he knew something, if not personally, at least by anecdote, of all illustrious persons, from the Emperor Alexander, to Murat's cook ; and possessed abundance of excellent stories, collected from all countries. He knew the rent roll of all the large estates in England, how much their respective owners won or lost at Newmarket, or Crockford's, could tell to a bird what had been killed at the most celebrated *battus*, and by whom. He frequented the betting room at Tattersall's, and was, he did not know how, always lucky in guessing the horse that would win the Derby, though he never profited by his skill ; he lived too fast as it was, without racing, but the continent was open, and a little change of climate was good for Lady Lucy, and amused the young ladies.

Why, it may be asked, did such a man come to *quiet* Eastbrook Park ? He was just returned with his family from a two year's residence on the continent, he had no establishment yet in England ; it was very convenient to visit a little, previous to forming one ; Lady Lucy and Lady Vernon were distant relations and old

friends, and having himself no other engagement ready, he joined his family, and accepted of Sir Thomas's hospitality, for he could "run up to town" if he found it insufferably dull. But he was a man who knew how to glean amusement, wherever it suited him to do so ; and he had formed the laudable resolution of making some out of Mrs. Beaumont, by playing her off. She was one of those persons who, having had an unexpected piece of good fortune, and owing it in some measure to their own personal merit, are perfectly in good humour with themselves and the world. She had been for many a year a Bath belle, almost a beauty ; but had unluckily arrived at that nameless age at which all single ladies stop, still Fanny Phillips !—but the death of a singular man of large fortune in the neighbourhood of Bath, called his brother from India, where he had accumulated more pagodas than he knew what to do with ; having at the same time obtained an unmanageable stock of bile ; in this forlorn state, encumbered by the addition of ten or twelve thousand a year, he renewed his acquaintance with Miss Fanny Phillips, whom he had often taken on his knee as a child, before he went to India ; she was not long in transferring

herself from his knee to his heart ; and it must be owned if *she* was a *lucky* woman, *he* was a very *fortunate* man ! she made him a charming wife, she lost no time in opening his house, the doors of which had rusted on their hinges, its key having been lost for years. She new-furnished it in perfect taste as to expense, put as much varnish and gilding as possible on the old pictures and their frames ; patronised his black cook, and made herself perfect connoisseur in mullagatawny soup, and currie, and was never failing in her attentions to all Mr. Beaumont's Asiatic luxuries—but all would not prolong his valuable life ; a fit of jaundice made her a widow, and sole possessor of all his land and pagodas. She had in due time recovered the shock, and now, with an unmarried sister as a companion, was fully enjoying all her good fortune. Of Miss Phillips we need only remark she was a person of *habit*, a great worker ; knew every new invention for bazaars and charity stalls ; kept so exact an account of her works that she could detect one of her own court plaster cases anywhere ; and thought the world would be at an end if she failed to wind her watch up as the clock struck nine.

The second dinner bell made every one hurry down,

and a party from east, west, north, and south, assembled for the first time in the drawing room: the gentlemen, clothed in their usual quantity of broad cloth, were standing round the fire, whilst the ladies, stripped of their furs and shawls, like butterflies who had just left their chrysalis, were shivering on the sofas; and with just light enough from the fire to prevent people running against each other.

Before the ladies appeared, Arthur Nugent, with the curiosity of a very young man, had been asking his cousin what sort of girls the Miss Latour's were?

“All I know of them,” said Frederic, “was three or four years ago, when they ‘smelt of bread and butter;’ the eldest was a clumsy, puddingish, girl, with a complexion that *ought* to have been fair, but *was* muddy; the other was a dark gipsey, with a pair of very saucy black eyes. Nothing to be afraid of, Arthur, unless you are a determined swain; I give you free leave with these damsels, but don’t poach on my manor, or meddle with Louisa Grey, I intend to keep her for my own special amusement.”

Arthur was young, gay, and indiscriminating; and quite ready to be pleased with every body, happy to

play any part in an under plot for his cousin's amusement, provided, like the Jackal, he had his share, and with rather a significant look he promised to keep from attentions, as desired.

“ But, my good fellow,” said Frederic, “ don't run away with a notion that I am in love, or going to be in love with Louisa Grey. Venus herself would hardly inspire me, unless she was an *heiress*! but I have a natural antipathy to your travelled Misses, who have been tight laced in Paris, smothered with accomplishments at Rome, and have had French counts, and Italian marquises, sighing over them, and I don't intend to make myself cheap to the Miss Latour's, or any others, and so I shall just save appearances by a few common attentions elsewhere: now we understand each other.”

Frederic in vain was endeavouring to pierce through the “ darkness made visible,” to find out which of the three ladies in white was Louisa Grey (for a few years, and the step from the close bonnet and parted hair of an uncome-out girl, and the metamorphosis into a come-out one, armed at all points, was so great, that dinner was announced, and the elderly ladies and gentleman had

trotted off, before he had made his selection); Lady Vernon settled the point by saying :

“ Frederic, take care of Miss Latour :” and the lady hooked herself on his arm, he was so provoked that, during their short walk to the dining room, he formed the noble resolution to be as disagreeable and inattentive as possible to the lady thus forced upon him.

On the opposite side of the table were seated Grace Latour and Mr. Beresford, the curate of the parish, an agreeable young man, whose name and connexions were a general passport in the neighbourhood. Next to him sat Louisa Grey and Arthur Nugent, who, however, continued to give Frederic a look, assuring him he remembered their bargain. Though Pope has libelled the sex by saying

“ Most women have no characters at all,”

but are distinguished by “ fair and brown,” we must take the liberty, in the 19th century, to aver that there are distinctions of genus as well as species.

Miss Latour was tall, exquisitely fair, with beautiful brown hair, but no great expression of countenance, a perfect *languid* beauty, with a captivatingly

soft voice. Her sister was a direct contrast, and they had been called the black and the white heart cherries. Every one knows Marmontel's *petit nez retroussé*, but Grace Latour had not *le nez retroussé*, for her nose and brow were finely formed; her mouth was not good, but she had brilliant eyes and a fine set of teeth, and was altogether, though a very small person, *piquante* and *spirituelle*.

Louisa Grey was by far the handsomest, though the least striking, of the three; a pale Madonna beauty, and, to Frederic's great astonishment, the laughing girl was a pensive, interesting, and now melancholy looking young woman. He had looked several times at her before he could recollect whence had come the change; and then it occurred to *him* that she had lost her only brother in some particularly distressing way: he would have reasoned on the improbability of such deep grief for a brother, but the soup was going round, and moreover General Dorozenski and Count Wszebor arrived, and were announced: Sir Thomas insisted they should take their seats at dinner *sans toilette*; a place was made for the general by Lady Vernon, and for his friend by Grace Latour. The latter was a hand-

some, sickly looking, Pole, with more moustache and larger whiskers than quite suits English taste ; his fair neighbour took her tone from the general, and addressed him in French, and he in return made abundance of civil bows.

The dinner was devoured and discussed in the usual way, General Dorozenski ate, drank, talked and laughed ; gave accounts of the magnificent, yet peculiar, way of life amongst the great manufacturers of Manchester, Preston, and Liverpool ; and told some good stories of the cotton spinners. Dessert passed, and Frederic had only remarked of his neighbour, Miss Latoar, that she had good taste in the wine she chose after fish, that her voice was certainly mellifluous, and, as the cook had done his best, things rather improved with him. There is nothing like a capital dinner for putting people in a good humour, even if they are not professed epicures. "Lie lightly on him earth who" reduced Gastronomy to a science, theoretical, practical, experimental, and conversational, for how many, otherwise *dull*, dinners does that make interesting and agreeable !

Dr. Johnson has said "that in a company of gene-

rals and admirals every other man falls in his own opinion ; and that even the great Lord Mansfield would have crept under the table in such society, if they had talked of the engagements they had been in." Two of the present party had a little of this cold key feel. Mr. Latour, who must play the first fiddle, or not play at all, and Frederic ; the former determined to gulp it down manfully, and get what he could out of the talkative general, and make his anecdotes pass elsewhere, as having heard his *excellent friend* General Dorozenski say so and so ; for he, like Frederic, was a determined egotist, but of a different description ; he made all men and all things contribute to his own individual pleasure and profit, but it was the pleasure of display ; and if in any one mortal " self love and social were the same," he was that person, for he had no gratification without a theatre and an audience.

Frederic's egotism was a *disease* that almost preyed on his vitals, something that mixed itself with, and embittered, every thing ; he might be said to find, " from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall," something poisonous to his own temper and feelings. He tried to persuade himself that a half Russian and

half Englishman, as the general was from birth, and a thorough bred Pole, were but civilized bears at best ; and his selfish spleen was gaining its dominion when they went into coffee.

He was not meant by nature
A silly or a worthless creature,
He had a heart disposed to feel,
Wanted not spirit, taste, but *zeal*.

Yet situations, and the unlucky fashion of the day, had spoilt, or at least obscured, his better nature. An entailed estate, and three daughters born before him, had made him anxiously wished for ; and, though Sir Thomas had neither threatened, nor determined, to drown his fourth daughter, his son was most welcome, and rendered doubly precious by Lady Vernon's ill health, which followed his birth, giving little reason to hope for another son. He was a remarkably engaging child ; and it must in justice be acknowledged that Sir Thomas and Lady Vernon did all *they* could to prevent his being spoilt ; the former took pains to make him manly, and bred him to the tastes and pursuits of a country gentleman ; and the latter, to give him sound principles : but he was a great favourite with his sisters,

who were devoted to him ; and every thing in the house seemed naturally to yield to his will and pleasure ; Frederic's dog, Frederic's pony and his birds, &c., were all objects of interest, because they were *his*. How could he help thinking of himself, if every body was thinking of him ? Alas ! that the situation meant as the most favoured of Providence (that which a late king said comprehended *every* thing a man could desire,) should be a snare to its possessor ; and engender that egotism which is not only incompatible with the happiness of the individual, but equally contrary to the self-denying precepts of religion.

CHAPTER II.

A *public* school is the hot-bed of selfishness, and its first maxim is to take care of *number I.* There is nothing at college likely to counteract this, either in precept, or the example of those who lead lives, for the most part, of individual indulgence. And, to crown the whole, *selfishness* is the *fashionable vice of the day.*

Napoleon was the *Emperor* of the *selfish*, and though his had been dignified as the *superlative degree*, and rising to the *sublime*, still it had the same base origin, though its effects were different from the sordid passion of the miser, who heaps up riches, without the heart to use them—Bonaparte's was a refinement that squandered, as it amassed.

But, not to tire our readers with a dry discussion, on a point we wish to exemplify in practice, we will follow the ladies to the drawing room, where Miss Latour entreated Emily's interest with lady Vernon, yet, at the same time, in her own most captivating manner, implored her to allow her to fetch her dear little poodle, assuring her it was not only the most beautiful, and most intelligent, but the very best behaved little dog in the world.

The request was instantly granted ; Lady Vernon promised to give strict orders that Sir Thomas's old spaniel should be kept in his room, and said she would request Frederic not to let his favourite terrier follow him into the drawing room.

By the time Nina had shewn herself, or been shewn off, by her mistress, and, a little fatigued by the exertion was comfortably reposing on a pillow of the sofa, the gentlemen joined the party, the two foreigners fresh from their toilettes, blazing with orders. Frederick hated lap dogs, and would not always tolerate their owners, and, on Lady Vernon saying, “my dear Frederic, I have promised that Rover shall be kept in your father's room, and I hope you will give orders that

Vixen may not come in the way of Miss Latour's little beautiful darling."

"Oh, Ma'am, don't make yourself the least uneasy, for well broke dogs (and I trust ours are such,) never touch lap dogs, they hold them in as great contempt as racers do donkeys," and swallowing his coffee and his spleen, he threw himself on a sofa, and indulged in a sort of dog's sleep, because he could not get near Louisa Grey, who was seated at the piano forte, and surrounded; and he had determined not to give him-himself the trouble to be agreeable to any one else: the card tables were then formed.

Not to listen to the music going on must have been the height of fastidiousness, for the Miss Latours sang exquisitely, and their duets, accompanied by their guitars, were perfect. Arthur Nugent turned over the leaves, and Count Wszebor listened with the air of an enthusiast and a judge. Grace Latour, who had discernment enough to see a little into Frederic's character, said to Arthur Nugent, "Do tell me what sort of a man that impracticable cousin of yours is?"

"The best fellow breathing, only a little too indolent and a good deal too fond of himself."

She wanted no more to determine to make her amusement out of him. He was not particularly fond of music, excepting liking Pasta, Madame Vestris, and Miss Paton, because every young man did like them ; but when a song had finished, and some movement proclaimed the music over, he sauntered towards the instrument, and faintly hoped “ they had not yet done.”

“I never waste my energies on lullabys,” said Grace Latour : “ if you want to go to sleep, I dare say Mr. Nugent will play you the last new Christchurch chaunt ; or, if you want awakening, perhaps Count Wszebor will give us one of those beautiful marches his country is famous for ; I am certain he is a musician, for he listens like one.”

The Count bowed, and Frederic turned on his heel ; the ladies took their seats at a work table, and on a sofa, till now exclusively possessed by Nina.

There is no point in which foreigners differ more from Englishmen than in their readiness to please, and be pleased : the latter “ hide their talents in a napkin,” and are always *hoarse*, or *shy* when they could be brought into play, and are often too proud to make themselves agreeable. But Count Wszebor, without

any farther entreaty, sat down to the instrument, and played some such beautiful, and spirit-stirring marches, that even the whist players laid down their cards to listen; and the General took the opportunity of relating an action with the Turks, in which his friend had gallantly led his troops to that particular march, and had been victorious, though severely wounded; he was come to England for medical advice, had been very much restored by drinking the waters at Bath, or using the baths at Brighton, he did not recollect which.

Mrs. Beaumont was quite sure she had seen the Count before; was never mistaken in a face she had once seen; only when at Bath he was paler, and if possible more interesting; recollecting hearing he was a Polish nobleman of distinguished bravery.

If Frederic had played like Cramer, nothing would have tempted him to lend himself to other people's amusement, how much soever he might expect them to contribute to his; and yet his self-love winced a little at such popularity; and though he would not have earned it himself, he felt a little, as Dr. Johnson had described, sunk in his self-importance; he had re-

course to a newspaper, whilst others gathered around the table to see some splendid Parisian albums, the Miss Latours had brought over.

We have heard of a house where there were *seventeen* albums on the table at once—here there were only *seven*. The Miss Latours had each two, one for drawings, and the other for poetry; but not like our native productions, with Bramah locks, that if a key is lost, can *never be opened*; but with magnificent embossed clasps studded with turquoises, that had not the faculty of *fastening at all*.

Albums were unluckily another of Frederic's detestations; and, if he could have condescended to ridicule what he considered to be an intolerable nuisance, he would have described the way in which ladies bargain for contributions, with the address of Stock-brokers on the Royal Exchange.

Grace Latour had made up her mind to inflict upon Frederic what children practise on a black cat in a dark room, stroking its hairs backwards, to elicit electric sparks; and he was equally disposed with Grimalkin to give her a little scratch in return, when opportunity offered.

“ By the bye, Mr. Vernon, (said she,) I know you are a poet, you must positively give me a copy of verses for my album ; I never excuse any person of genius.”

Frederic protested he was no genius, never wrote any verses but nonsense verses at school.

“ Well, that is the most astonishing thing I ever knew, for I am a great craniologist, and I felt so sure, I would have staked all my reputation in the science on it, that you had the true poetical bump ; do order your man to cut that particular lock of your hair a little closer, or you will be tormented out of your life for sonnets ; but I am never disappointed of what I intend to have, so Mr. Nugent, who is so obliging as to promise me some verses of his writing, will, I am sure, be so very good natured as to write another copy for you, I will put your name to it, and it will do quite as well.”

Frederic did not feel that it would do *quite as well*, for he happened really to have a taste for poetry, and wrote very pretty gentlemanly verses ; and to have some of Arthur’s school-boy stuff exposed to the world for *his*, was a great deal too bad ! how he wished albums

at the bottom of the red sea ! we will not suspect him at that moment of wishing the same fate to their fair owners. To them he shewed his contempt by looking over a game at chess between Count Wszebor and Mr. Beresford ; the former was triumphant, though his opponent was reckoned the best player in the county.

Frederic perceived he could not play chess with the Count, and he would have proposed *ecarté*, but all foreigners are so knowing in that game ; and he had smarted more than once at Paris for such temerity, he therefore proposed *ecarté* to Mr. Beresford, but he had his Christmas day sermon to look over, and expected his gig to be announced every moment.

“ Well then, Arthur, what say you ? ”

But he was engaged in Miss Latour’s service, drawing some lines round a landscape, “ but he was sure Mrs. Elenor Latour, *aunty*, as she was called, would play with Frederic, and she was a capital player, much better than he was.”

The lady was quite ready, and the mortified Frederic could not recede, as it was his own proposal. His partner did understand the game as well as most lady players ; but she disliked its phraseology,

and could not bring herself to say to a gentleman "*I propose*," so she substituted "*I beg some cards*."

Arthur, hearing this, as he passed Frederic, clapped him on the shoulder, with "Well, Frederic, I see you are come to the kitchen game of *beg of my neighbour* at last." This was too provoking, but Frederic's evil genius prevailed this evening; and he was doomed to all sorts of petty mortifications; what others would have laughed off touched his tender, morbid, self-love, and seemed to irritate it to disease; throwing down his cards, he declared Mrs. Elenor was much too good a player for him; he had no chance with her.

Seeing him disengaged, Grace Latour attacked him with one of the million of charades that some pretty little morocco books of Miss Phillips's contained; and which, written in a most beautiful and *small* hand, were always ready for admiration, or puzzling. Frederic turned off this attack with as much good humour as he could command, for fear of a repetition of the poetry business; begged Arthur might on this occasion be his substitute, he had no genius for charades, and was particularly dull that night; and immediately busied

himself in doing the honours of the supper tray, not a very common occurrence with him ; but he wanted to escape one lady, and renew his acquaintance with another ; and, by way of refreshment to his own mind, he offered it to Louisa Grey, in the more visible form of wine and water, and jelly, which he mixed with, at least, an attention, if not a science, that would not have disgraced Eustace Ude.

“ I am so glad,” he observed to her, “ that you are of my way of thinking, about albums and charade books, for I see you have neither.”

“ Oh, don’t be too sure of that, for perhaps I may combine both evils in one ; and have a more abominable thing called a *scrap* book, for I take in *every* *thing*.”

“ Well, perhaps that is more tolerable ; for at any rate, there is no display in your’s, and that is what I most hate ; I will look out for fugitive pieces for you, and as I cannot contribute in any other way, I will cut out of newspapers every thing likely to suit you ; depend on me !”

This, though said in rather an under tone, was not lost upon Grace Latour.

"I am so glad Mr. Vernon," she exclaimed, "that I have at last discovered your turn, I felt sure you wrote *Whims and Oddities*, and had some hand in *Sayings and Doings*! I was certain your expressions were so familiar to me I must have met with them in a book. Let me know when you have another volume on the stocks; I can help you to some capital stories, even to banditti, if you like them."

Frederic was all gratitude, and would not fail to remind her of her promise, if he ever should be guilty of writing a book, but she was very safe at present, as he professed himself a decided plodder.

Turning over one of the splendid little volumes we have just described, she found a puzzle composed of angles and squares.

"Now you positively must assist me, Mr. Vernon, you cannot have forgot Euclid; do tell me what all these mathematical figures mean, for I perceive you are a matter-of-fact-man, perhaps you can draw my horoscope?"

The breaking up of the party for the night, saved the retort courteous. Frederic retired to think of Brighton, and wish himself there, or any where, even on the chain pier, inclement as the night was; nor is this

very wonderful, for sarcasm cuts sharper than frost: to be called a *matter-of-fact-man* was a deep wound indeed to the *amour propre* of a man whose good opinion of himself was not slight. Frederic at first threw himself into the easiest of all easy chairs; but if the mind is disconcerted the body is restless: he left the “lap of luxury,” and walked up and down the room. There are many things, that pass muster in society, that produce a very different effect when “the heart communes with itself” retired and alone.

Frederic was in the highest degree irritable and uncomfortable; and he did not know why: his mother always had such dreadful people at Christmas. Mrs. Beaumont was insufferable, she knew every body, and always talked of *her* carriage, *her* horses, *her* house, and *her* acquaintance; and maiden aunts were always abominations. And those Russians! where could his father have picked up them and their orders? to Brighton he must go, it was the only place where one could exist in frost and snow—life was not worth having at Eastbrooke Park, with such society. There was one little hitch to setting off next day, he believed it was Christmas day, so he thought he heard some one say.

Don't imagine, gentle reader, that Frederic Vernon had any vulgar prejudices about days: all were alike to *him*; but he was very fond of his mother, though he did not like her set of acquaintance; and, absurd as he might think, what he called, her *prejudices*, he could not help respecting them as her's; *she* would not like his going from home on Christmas-day, and, as he was fairly there, he would not vex her, but the following day he positively would go; nay, to acquit himself of all blame, if he should find setting off to-morrow irresistible, he would toss up, and let chance decide the matter.

His servant entered the room as the sovereign was in the air——

“Which is it, Jackson, heads or tails?”

“Tails, sir.”

“Then I go to Brighton, Friday.”

“I fear, sir, the roads will be hardly passable; the general's servant gives a very bad account of them, in the hilly country: it snows now, sir, and Sir Thomas has ordered a path to be swept to church, and the road cleared down the hill in the park, that the carriage may go safely; and I dare say it will take twenty men to do it by church time.”

Frederic hated the exaggeration of servants, though General Dorozenski had given a like report, but then those Russians were used to go over such vast level plains of ice in a sledge; they were no judges of English practicabilities, and post-horses! He went to bed, but not to sleep, he thought, and thought is a foe to rest

“When all the drossy feelings of the day,
Touch'd by the wand of truth, dissolve away.”

Frederic could not conceal from himself that there were *le pour et le contre* as to Brighton. Lady Henshawe and her charming daughter were there. Lady Henshawe was one of the most captivating women in the world, insinuating in address, irresistible in manner, and her dinners! they were not select, they were *exclusive, recherchée, EXQUISITE!*

Her husband had been ambassador at various courts, she had accompanied him even to Constantinople, and therefore knew how to combine Eastern and Northern luxuries. Lord Henshawe was now gone to a lucrative government in India, and she would have gone also, for she loved the splendour of representation, but she had two daughters; they were too good for the In-

dian market, where the most they could expect was a high military officer, who was probably a soldier of fortune. In England they were fit for a duke, and could at last but take up with an earl. Lady Henshawe had disposed of one in a very brilliant match, but certain points were discovered in the young lady's temper, which had been most carefully concealed by her *prudent* mother, and the discovery was against her sister, who was still more captivating than the eldest.

Lady Henshawe had fixed on a certain duke for her, but he had otherwise disposed of himself, and two springs in London, and two winters at Brighton, had lowered her tone a little, and Frederic knew that *now* she would even take up with *him*; but he was not in love with the charming Agnes: he was well aware of her mother's unbounded extravagance, and he had no reason to doubt the daughter possessed the same taste.

If he went to Brighton, he must meet Agnes on the Steyne, for every body is early at Brighton; then he must ride with her, and see her look lovely on a beautiful horse of his own, which he had, under an odd circumstance, lent her. Then would come Lady Henshawe's luxuriant dinners, and in the evening he *must*

dance with the daughter, after he had drank Lady Henshawe's champagne Could mortal man resist all this fascination ! And yet Frederic did not want a wife, and still less did he want such an one as Miss Henshawe would make.

There was yet another day between him and fate ! But he could not understand himself, or why he felt so uncomfortable at home ; he had all he could wish for, his will was law, Sir Thomas was extremely fond of him, and liberal to him to any extent he asked for. And we must do Lady Vernon the justice to say, that, when he was a little boy, she constantly reminded him of the good bishop of Sodor and Man's maxim, that "we ought every day to deny ourselves *something*, to get the habit of self-control ;" the world had taught an opposite lesson to the Bishop, and Frederic had learnt, in that pernicious school, to deny himself *nothing* that he had the power of procuring. But nobody finds out their own disease, or always acknowledges it when it is discovered by their physician.

Frederic might have found ample amusement in the party collected at Eastbrooke ; he had travelled, and so had the Misses Latour, and they might have had

mutual adventures to relate ; and, with the gay and playful turn of Grace, her description might have been particularly amusing. Count Wszebor had belonged to other countries ; he had anecdotes of Turks and Cossacks, and various parts of the extensive Russian dominions, which would have afforded ample information and amusement ; but then Frederic would not have been the *first* person, and nothing else suited *him* ; besides it was vulgar to talk of travels, every body travelled, as they ate *thin* bread and butter at breakfast ; and to be pleased with any thing that did not administer *exclusively* to his vanity and egotism was impossible ; and yet that same self-love was very much like an injured muscle, if torpid, friction would do it good, but if irritated, friction only increased the evil, the more it was rubbed the more it smarted—it wanted soothing and pampering, the two things most calculated to increase the disease.

It has been asserted by Malthus, and such writers, that if there were not contagious diseases to check population, the world must be over-run with inhabitants. Formerly the plague used to do the necessary office of thinning mankind ; then the small-pox, but, since vacci-

nation has been introduced, there would be no hope of human beings not at last devouring each other, if it was not for a disease sprung up in the higher classes of society, and from them, as a matter of course, likely to spread lower and lower. This extraordinary disease, unlike the plague, or small-pox, chiefly affects the *imagination*, its severest suffering is from the apprehension of its attack. In short, *to be bored* is so very dreadful, there is nothing one can encounter, *short of hanging*, that is not preferable.

That Frederic was a good deal under the influence of this baneful disease the reader need not be told, but he could not make it out, and fancied he was the most ill-used, devoted person in the world, because he was always *bored*. Could he have employed a little sound reasoning, and divested his feelings of *self*, he might have discovered that he had in his own power every means of happiness ; and, at this present time, of amusement also, for Grace Latour was clever, some of the rest of the party very agreeable ; and, if he had taken to the first good humouredly, and only retorted in the same strain, they might have enjoyed a laugh at each other without any irritable or angry feeling ; but now

it was *ruse contre ruse*. But this was to be endured one day longer, and *only one*: and with that consoling reflection Frederic fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

WHATEVER may be said of the balmy air of Italy, or the exhilarating climate of Paris, there is nothing so suited to the English constitution as a bright, clear, frosty day ; nor any thing that heightens the native complexion of Englishwomen to so brilliant a point as a walk when the ground is covered with snow : the contrast and reflection have some power “not dreamt of in our philosophy.”

The younger members of the party walked to church, and even Frederic made this remark, particularly on Louisa Grey : her complexion too was heightened by benevolence, and the interesting duties of the

day. After church, she and Emily Vernon were to preside at a dinner of roast beef and plum-pudding, given to the children of Lady Vernon's school; and at the school-house were also the aged, who had been clothed by the same benevolent person, and who were looking forward to their beef and ale at home, her gift also. Of course the gentlemen who were of the party to church, which did not include the foreign guests, took no part in this exhibition, but accepted Sir Thomas's invitation, together with the Miss Latours and Mrs. Elenor, to see some improvement he was planning, by throwing down hedges, and adding to his park; and he had a particular pleasure not only in consulting his son's inclination, but giving his taste the credit of every judicious alteration, so that Frederic had a gratification of his self-love he did not deserve; but he took it, notwithstanding, and was accordingly in great good humour with himself and those around him, more particularly so, as by Miss Latour not coming down before the party went into dinner, he was at liberty to take in, and place himself next to, Louisa Grey.

He made himself remarkably agreeable, and though he rallied his neighbour on her taste for Sunday schools,

she defended herself with so much tact and good humour, that he *almost* thought she was right, at least he had no objection to *her* patronizing, in so amiable a manner, his mother's institutions; nay, he even liked that the *charity whims*, as he called them, of one he so much loved, should meet with the approbation of so very *sensible* a person as Miss Grey.

There are some counties, and those not so far from the metropolis as might be imagined, where the old fashioned mummers still go round at Christmas. When Lady Vernon was informed this band was in the house, she desired their coming into the drawing room, their ancient privilege, might be delayed till the gentlemen came in, as she thought it a national custom, new to her foreign guests; they hardly understood them; but Grace Latour was enchanted with Maid Marian, a great coarse red-armed dairy maid, dressed in some extraordinary left off ball dress. Queen Elizabeth was equally delightful in her hoop petticoat.

She asked if they had no other pageants? "Yes, one, and they could perform it the next night, provided their usual round would allow them time."

When they were gone Sir Thomas declared it was quite impossible they could go to Crowland and return to Eastbrooke park. This started an idea in Grace's mind, which she reserved for future consultation.

The evening of Christmas day was passed up stairs with cards, and down stairs with a bowl of punch ; but on the regale below being mentioned, some was ordered up with the supper tray, and declared so excellent by the General, that a tumbler of it hot was ordered to his room.

This to Frederic had been a very agreeable day, he had tolerated the mummers for the sake of popularity, and he had very much improved his acquaintance with Louisa Grey ; and, much as he had been disappointed at first in her altered character, he now found her, if not gay, and amusing, extremely *interesting*, and there was such quiet good sense in her ideas — he, with his usual egotism, flattered himself she thought on many points exactly as he did.

Another circumstance had more powerfully acted on his resolution to go next day to Brighton, General Dorozenski had so vividly described the pleasures of driving a sledge, and how easily one was constructed,

even an old boat, put on an iron keel, would make one ; and the horse or horses, *in Lasso*, so captivated Frederic's fancy, that, knowing there was a light canoe in the boat house, he determined to set up a sledge, and, if the frost continued, to drive it to Brighton ; it would be quite new there, at least he hoped no one would drive *in Lasso*.

He sent accordingly for the blacksmith and the carpenter, who would not have been drawn from their Christmas ale, but for the hopes of an additional glass or two at the Great House. They, of course, between ale and punch, were ready to undertake any thing the young squire wished.

After this important interview, Frederic retired in good humour with himself and the world ; that is to say, his self-love and importance had food without the bitter pill of mortification.

There are many bright thoughts visit one's pillow, and Frederic recollected an extraordinary skewbald horse that runs in one of the stages on the public road that passes near Eastbrooke Park. This he communicated next morning to Arthur, and intreated his assistance in procuring this horse *as cheap as possible*, and

above all, not to say *he* wanted it, as that would double its price, and, with brown George as a shafter (if one may be so called where there were no shafts), it would make a very creditable appearance.

All the morning Frederic was occupied giving directions and inspecting the progress of turning the canoe into a sledge, Count Wszebor had been most obliging in making accurate drawings of every part ; and his servant Plosko was of no small service ; all prospered, and just at dusk Arthur returned with an ostler leading the skewbald.

He had made a capital bargain, and Frederic returned to the house, a little tired with his morning's exertions, and yet acknowledging the time had gone very quickly. He requested Arthur to stay and inspect the last part of the work, as the workmen were new to the principle on which sledges were constructed. Whilst so doing, he overheard the following conversation between Tom Brown, Frederic's groom, and one of the postillions.

“ Well,” said Tom, “ a gentleman’s a gentleman, and one as is rich may do as he pleases. To be sure my master is one all over ; but he is no more judge of

horseflesh than Jenny Dairy, for he has bought, and I dare say given a sight of money for it, such a rip of a horse as I would not be seen on at a bull-bait."

The body coachman joined the party, and agreed in opinion as to the merits of the skewbald, adding, "I must say, that for Sir Thomas, though he is my master, he *was* a *proper* judge of a horse, and as bold a rider as one would wish to see ; though now, God help us, he cares for nothing but a quiet pony to go round his farm, and a pair of horses to draw my lady to church. I have lived here man and boy these forty years, and I remember, as if it was yesterday, what a set of fine coach horses we had ; never stirred without six, and two out-riders, father was coachman then, and uncle Sam rode the leaders ; and I remembers too when he poor man was first took ill, I supplied his place, I am sure I had not a dry thread about me for fright, and once or twice, as I drove along, I looked round at fath'er, and he gave me a cut with his whip to mind my own business. Aye, aye, we had ten hunters in our stable, but as for your gentlemen hunters, who smell of perfume instead of the stable, I have not much opinion of *them*."

" Well you may say so, coachy," said Tom, " those Melton gentry, its my mind, are not the fox-hunters of your day, nor their cattle neither ; there's Lord Gallopdale with twelve hunters in his stable, can hardly hunt four times a week ; bless your heart ! there's as many tricks at Melton as at New Market, every bit ; only they keeps em more to themselves ; and a fine deal of money they wins or loses, in and out of stable, setting up all night to game."

" Give me the old fox-hunters," rejoined the coachman, " if they were a little groggy after a hard run, why they slept sound after it, and got up next morning none the worse ; that's more than you can say, Tom, of your gentry in Leicestershire : many a man as has hunted all day has ruined himself before morning, that's my notion."

These worthies were then joined by Plosko, the Count's servant, a sort of amphibious creature, well known in foreign service ; he could cut his master's hair if required ; dress, or shoe, his horse ; cook his beef-steak, mend his apparel, and fight by his side : as he approached, the coachman observed, in a language he imagined he imperfectly understood, that he thought " the Polelander was *up* to a good deal."

On the latter inspecting the new purchase, he set the stable yard in a roar, by asking if it was a natural or a painted horse ? when this was a little subsided, he asserted on *his honour* that both the Arabs and Persians, who were very particular about their horses, and amongst whom he had served, *always* painted theirs when they wanted to sell them, or to make any fine shew ; and moreover put on false tails and manes. Provoked by their incredulity at this assertion, he offered, “if *Monsieur* pleased,” to prove its truth, and make an old gray mare, who went in the market cart, a proper match for the new purchase ; all the stable establishment declared themselves eager for the experiment.

Arthur was highly diverted, and in the simplicity of his heart sought out Frederic before he dressed, and repeated all this, as a capital joke. There are various readings of the same passage, and we are not sure that Frederic, with his morbid state of mind, thought it any joke at all : he would, in truth, have been gladly spared the recital ; it did not quite suit his sensitive feelings to be thought lightly of, even by his groom ; he rather wished Arthur at Cambridge, and he could not help

repeating the words of Sir Fretful Plagiary: “ There is always some —— good natured friend ready to tell one all that is said against one : ” but we must leave him “ to chew the cud of sweet and bitter fantasy, ” whilst his man performed the duties of the toilette *on* him.

It was the remark of a great painter, Annibal Carracci, that if there were more than twelve figures in a picture, all over above that number were figures *to be let*. Yet in many of the finest specimens of art there are many more introduced, but they are subordinate groups made use of for the purpose of bringing the principal figures forward ; and are like the crimson curtains of the moderns, to throw a glow, or reflect a light ; so in our picture we could imitate the graphic art, and if such auxiliaries were requisite, we could bring forward a group of dowagers in the fore ground, or they might better stand out for a side skreen ; and some men, who drive home at night, or leave early in the morning, to fill up the canvas ; yet without being of sufficient importance for particular delineations. But all these we must leave chiefly to the imagination of our readers, or we shall use them for light and shade as may suit us.

Some of the country neighbours denominated natives will be occasionally added to the party: of these a Sir John Sedley, (for, as Pelham says, "Baronets hang together like bees,") his eldest son and two daughters came to dinner the day after Christmas day; the young ladies passably agreeable, for young women who had been educated in the country, went little to London, and *never to Paris*. And unexpectedly, as the dinner bell rang, arrived Major Mac Venom; these gave the party a new turn; the worthy baronets talked over the probable business at the quarter sessions, to which they were going next day.

London was empty, but Major Mac Venom was brimful of the London University, and the numerous advantages those who could neither read nor write gained by lectures on every abstruse science, and how learnedly the London mechanics talked of hydrostatics, pneumatics, and a hundred other *attics* whose names they could neither spell nor pronounce.

Sir John thought the *operative mechanics*, as they were now called, much better without such knowledge, it would only end in our carpenters and blacksmiths thinking themselves wiser than their employers, and

not suffering themselves to be directed; and our horses would be shod, not according to experience, but upon the last new principle, till every one in the stable was lamed.

Frederic felt glad he had plodders and not scientific artisans to complete his morning's work.

CHAPTER IV.

THE following day was a busy one, Frederic had turned over in his mind the project of painting the horse, and though he did not wish it to be made a joke of, till it was all over, he should like to take Mr. Sedley in, who pretended to be a great judge of horses. If brown George did not go quietly *in lasso*, which was very doubtful, the gray mare, though aged, had been a capital hunter, and had blood and figure about her still ; at all events he might as well talk to Tom Brown, about it ; and, finding the composition only red lead, soot, and small beer, and easily washed off, Plosko was summoned to the conference, he promised every thing, and Frederic recollected having heard a cavalry

officer mention something of the same kind, it was therefore to be done. Frederic gave Tom half a crown for a Christmas box, and the Pole a little bit of gold with “*tais tu, mon ami.*”

Mr. Sedley was passionately fond of snipe-shooting, he went early to the moor. The baronets were gone to the quarter sessions, and the general and his friend accompanied by Mac Venom as a *cicerone*, to see a wonderful paper-mill in the neighbourhood, where paper was now made by a new process, without hands, to the great grief of the surrounding poor, who used to find employment at it.

Plosko was eminently successful, and brown George unmanagably restive, or in Tom’s phrase, *properly rusty*, so the skewbalds were tried, and went admirably. Frederic, as driver, and Arthur behind to balance, and also to prevent the possibility of any one of the ladies wanting a drive, more especially Grace Latour.

All prospered, the horses went capitally; expectation had been raised to its utmost height in the house, by Arthur Nugent, and Plosko, so that when the equipage came round, the lower windows were crowded by the ladies of the party; the first story by the ladies’ maids;

and the upper, by house-maids, dairy-maids, &c.: several turns round by the house and through the wood were taken; and as the day drew to its close, Mr. Sedley returned from shooting—he was wet up to his knees, having been enjoying himself in half frozen water for eight hours, to get three shots; and therefore not disposed to stop and criticise, only gave his approving nod, and hastened to get some dry clothes.

Thus far, all was as could be wished; but it was very difficult to turn this tandem sledge into the stable yard, and, in doing so, it came in contact with a post, and received a sufficient shock to throw out Frederic and Arthur, but they were not hurt, and had no witnesses to the disaster, but some of the stable servants, so nothing was said about it.

Plosko, who acted as master of the ceremonies, declared nothing was wanting but a peculiar sort of plume, which he described, on the heads of the horses. It happened that his Hussar jacket and Polish cap had been voted *no livery*, therefore he was admitted into the house-keeper's room, and had made himself a great favourite there, and his numberless stories of hair-breadth escapes made considerable impression on the

Desdemona assembled there. He proposed instructing some one of them in making these plumes, but Frederic was afraid he might be too communicative, and therefore preferred consulting his sister. She most readily promised to manufacture the plumes, with some addition of peacocks', pheasants', and turkey feathers, to some old parrot feathers, she could find; and Louisa Grey volunteered her assistance, so very good humouredly, and executed the work so very ingeniously, "she was really a charming girl, if not so striking at first sight."

The other ladies had not been idle, for they had been making preparations for acting charades. On this being first proposed, Emily Vernon objected, because she knew Frederic so very much disliked them. She had heard him declare he would leave a house the next morning where they were acted. She therefore consulted Lady Vernon, who was unwilling to believe that her son could be so very selfish, and if he was, she thought it a good opportunity to oblige him to submit, she therefore gave *her* consent; and the thing went on.

The chief persons concerned were Grace Latour, the two Miss Sedleys, Arthur, who was always ready

for any thing ; and Mr. Sedley, who might be induced to take a small part, if wanted. Mr. Latour, who would have been a host, had gone up to town on *particular business*.

The acting of charades is almost too common, and too well understood to need description. Yet in case this work should go into any remote island in the Pacific Ocean, Van Dieman's land, or the new colonies in Australia, we shall give some account of this pastime, for the benefit of the natives.

The large drawing room at Eastbrooke was particularly well adapted for scenic exhibitions, having a small inner room, into which it opened by large folding doors, which communicated with the library, the hall, and the conservatory. A curtain placed before these doors made a perfect stage. When the charades began, Frederic was consulting his groom, and learnt from him that his sledge was so injured by the jolt he had given it that it would take a day nearly to repair it.

Tom had been rather prolix, so that the charades had a good deal advanced before Frederic returned to the drawing room, and it was towards the close of the following scene, he entered.

First were discovered three persons sitting quietly over the fire—they were suddenly roused by some bustle, all starting up, with countenances that said, “What can the matter be?” what is the *matter*? Then came a stout gentleman, wrapped up in great coats, cloaks, and comfortables, ready for the mail, and waiting to know when he could “be off.” This was followed by an exact representation of His Majesty’s picture of the Misers by Quintin Matsys, viz., two old men, one receiving, the other paying, money.

At the moment Frederic appeared, *the whole* came on: a very lovely young woman, evidently just married, leaning on an old, decrepid man, hobbling and coughing; to whom she was paying great attention, this was MATRIMONY, or MATTER of MONEY.

At first Frederic thought, and the thought provoked him, that the young bride was Louisa Grey; but he soon discovered it was Miss Sedley, who resembled her in height and size. Though internally annoyed at being present at the amusement, he went to the back of Louisa Grey’s chair; saying,

“ I see you think with me, and dislike this amusement, as you take no part in it.”

“ Oh, don’t give me credit I don’t deserve, I am not so nice as you think me; I have no dislike, on the contrary, I am much amused by charades so well acted.”

“ What can you possibly see in them that does not excite dislike, even disgust ? ”

“ Oh, just as much amusement as in a pantomime ; indeed more, for in charades there is less grotesque, and often, as in the present case, a great deal of moral.”

Another scene appeared to engage their attention ; it was an arrival: the master, the mistress, the chamber-maid and waiter, all capitally done, and the travellers tired, and wrapped up, passing over the stage, left no doubt the word was *Inn*.

Then came a little girl carrying a doll, and trying to dance it, but she looked almost too frightened to perform her part.

“ Where on earth could they get that poor little wretch,” said Frederic, “ and why did they drag her into such folly ? ”

Emily replied, "she was the housekeeper's niece."

"Then why was she not left to enjoy her sugared bread and butter in the still-room, and not brought trembling here?"

"Indeed, I think you are much mistaken," observed Louisa, "I dare say she is very proud of the distinction, and thinks it a very fine thing to come up stairs, and act with ladies and gentlemen; it will be an epocha in her life; and even if she did not like it, it is very good at her age, and at any age, to be obliged to do what we do not exactly *like*, to contribute to the amusement of others."

"I see" said Frederic, "you are quite a philosopher, drawing a moral inference from every thing."

"If you call that being a philosopher," replied Louisa, "I hope I am one, at least I wish always to draw good out of every thing. If I should change my present existence, I know nothing I should better like to be than a bee; to extract honey from poisonous flowers."

"Well then, I suppose I must dub you a Pythagorean, though I was more inclined to have called you a Stoic."

"I shall not quarrel with the last epithet," said Louisa, "only don't call me an Epicurean."

This was going pretty near the wind, but it was Louisa Grey who said it; and, according to the proverb, one man may better steal a horse, than another look over a hedge. Frederic was not offended, though such a speech from Grace Latour would have been ~~sarcasm~~, and given mortal offence; but their attention was again taken up by the scene.

A gentleman, whose haggard looks indicated that he was a distressed gamester, was offering a casket of jewels to a Jew, who was, in return, giving him some money; on the bags which contained it was written *Lent*.

On the concluding scene of *the whole*, all the ingenuity of the actors had been exerted. A young gentleman, in a magnificent shawl dressing-gown, and a pair of embroidered slippers, was reclining at full length on a sofa, and supported all round by pillows; on a horse shoe table was a most luxurious breakfast; every sort of delicacy, interspersed with newspapers, and pamphlets; before him, a fire-screen with a contrivance to hold a newspaper, without a hand; and every thing so completely within his reach, without any change

of posture, that the INDOLENT need not move from his reclining attitude.

The elderly gentlemen shook with laughter, and pronounced it inimitable.

Frederic started away from the exhibition, beckoned his sister, saying “ really this is insufferable : when is this mummery and folly to cease ? Not till every servant in the house is corrupted by it ? Much as I value Jackson, I shall discharge him to-morrow morning.”

Emily, though a little prepared for Frederic’s dislike to this species of amusement, was not for such a degree of anger at it, such as she had scarcely ever known him show before.

She calmly said “ I believe this is the last, but what has so particularly displeased you in it ? ”

“ Don’t you see ? or perhaps you are not aware that I have been *fool* enough to spend forty guineas in a Cashmere shawl, for a dressing gown, that La Meure has just invented ; and to have it lent for such an occasion as this, even before it has been seen, is perfectly enraged ! to have one’s servants bribed and corrupted to lend one’s clothes ! the next thing they wear them ! ! ”

Nothing disarms anger like a patient ear for the

cause of it: by the time Frederic had vented his ire, the exhibition was over, and Arthur was under examination.

Sir Thomas observed to the General, “ In my day, if you wanted to describe a fop or a fribble, you called him a Frenchman; but *they* have learnt more manly habits, and now I fear we may change the ridicule to an Englishman.”

Whilst this home, but random, thrust was making at Frederic’s imaginary dressing-gown; Emily drew Arthur towards her brother, when, to his great amazement, the obnoxious article of dress was no Cashmere shawl; but an ordinary linen with a patchwork border, made by Arthur’s sisters.

When a person fancies he has just reason to be provoked, and has been so, he does not like to be deprived even of the cause of his anger.

For a moment Frederic almost wished he had been right, even at the expense of Jackson, and his cashmere shawl; it was only a remark from Louisa Grey, of “ how ingenious Arthur’s sisters were, and how good-natured to devote so much of their industry to a part of their brother’s dress so little likely to be seen by

those who could appreciate it ;" followed by a deep sigh at the recollection of her own lamented brother, that prevented Frederic from leaving the room : this sigh went through his ear—where it penetrated to we know not.

He retired to his room, in no very enviable disposition, yet he could not, for the life of him, help feeling that there was something in this sigh, and Louisa's melancholy placid look, that acted on him as oil does on a stormy sea.

Why should she be such a superior creature ? she had only appeared when young a very nice, lively girl. But he forgot she had been brought up in a different school to what he had, the *School of Adversity*.

Her father, Colonel Grey, had distinguished himself early in the peninsular war, was on the Duke of Wellington's staff, and a favourite with him. Her mother, a sister of Mr. Latour's, went to Lisbon soon after the battle of Vimeira, but was obliged to return to England much injured in health. She relieved her constant anxiety during her separation from her husband by devoting herself to the education of her daughter, in which her sister Elenor took part.

On Napoleon's first abdication, Col. Grey returned to England, not much the worse for his long and arduous service ; he found his daughter about eleven years old, and all a fond father could wish. His enjoyment of home was brief ; Napoleon's escape from Elba called him again to active service at the battle of Waterloo : he was left on the field and returned on the list of *killed*.

This was a dreadful shock to Mrs. Grey, but this intelligence was speedily followed by news that he had been found on the following day alive, only wounded and mutilated. The revulsion of feeling was too much for his wife ; she set off for Brussels, her sister and daughter accompanying her to the coast where she was to embark ; but she died at an inn on the road, having extorted a promise from her sister never to separate from her daughter.

In time, Col. Grey returned to England, with the loss of his right arm, and a severe wound in his throat, that sometimes deprived him of speech. Broken in health, ruined in professional prospects, his Waterloo medal, an Order, a pension for his wound, and his half pay, were all his blood had earned.

But besides his daughter, he had another source of comfort, a son who had contrary, in the first instance, to his wishes preferred the navy to the army, but his own fate, and his son's conduct in several engagements, had reconciled him to the profession Edward Grey had chosen; and he looked forward with anxious hope to his being more successful than his father had been. Louisa devoted herself with the most unwearied attention to her father, she scarcely left him, she read to him, she wrote for him, and often spoke for him.

A sister of Col. Grey's, who had married a brother officer of his in early life, and gone to India with him, having lost him in the Deccan war, returned to England with one daughter, and settled at Bath, to be near her brother, who lived in the neighbourhood of that city.

Louisa received all the advantages of education with her cousin, and had opportunities of going into society with her aunt, but it was only when her father was tolerably easy she could be prevailed on to leave him, even for a few hours. She was ardently attached to her brother, and looked forward to his fame and wealth with nearly the same eagerness as her father did.

Alas ! he fell in a gallant attack on some pirates in the Mediterranean, just when Louisa's character was forming : this deep grief entirely changed it, and she was now only, at the end of two years, beginning in some degree to recover her spirits ; though with her father she always exerted herself to assume a degree of cheerfulness she could not feel. To others her grief, though deep, was calm, placid, and unobtrusive. That of her unfortunate father produced irritation and peevishness, which, added to acute bodily suffering, called on her for constant forbearance and incessant and cheerful submission to various privations.

She only left her father *now* because his sister Mrs. Barlow, her aunt, was with him ; her daughter had married and settled in Scotland, whither she had followed her, coming only to England to see her brother, and giving Louisa and Mrs. Elenor Latour, who lived with him, this opportunity of a little recreation ; and those who loved Louisa saw with pleasure that the change of scene was beneficial to her.

Frederic knew all these particulars but he heeded them little. Her father was *unlucky* to be sure, but for her brother, sailors *must* be knock'd at head some day

or other ; it was a part of the profession, and whether it was when a man was an admiral or lieutenant did not much matter !

As to the beneficial effects of these sorrows on Louisa's character, it never entered into his imagination. Indeed, nothing could have persuaded him it could be *beneficial*. He knew not how the heart is chastened and corrected by such discipline, and how all the latent and purest feelings are thus brought out, and how his own bane, *selfishness*, is thus conquered. He knew not that in blessing others she was doubly blessed. She—

“ Soothed not another's rugged path alone,
But scattered roses to adorn her own.”

His maxims had been all in an opposite direction, and what were their effects ? irritation and reaction on the most trivial occasions, to which the calm, resigned, and gentle sorrow brought on by the recollection of a beloved brother, formed a striking contrast.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day was Sunday. Frederic did not like Sunday, he thought it a *dull* day—not that he made much change in his every day habits. It was even worse in London than in the country, for many of the usual places of public and private amusement were inaccessible; it was so insufferably tiresome to hear every body you meet talk about going to *church*, one had been, another was going, and a third could not go: why need they say any thing about it? He never went to church, excepting *accidentally* when at home, because Sir Thomas and Lady Vernon asked if he was ill when he did not go there, and always teased him to have advice.

Somehow, he thought Sunday came round *oftener* than any other day—it shined no sabbath-day to him—there had been one already this week: not that Frederic doubted the truths of that religion in which he had been educated; but its *practice* encroached on his habits of self-indulgence.

There are many occasions on which we feel we must do as others do, even if we would not, were we left to our own decision, he therefore joined the party to church, but left it as soon as the service was over.

His sister and Louisa Grey were to be busy at the school, distributing the prizes gained in the year; and Miss Sedley, who was well versed in such business, offered her assistance. She, her father, and sister, were to have returned home after church, but the business of the quarter sessions did not finish on Saturday, and the two worthy baronets were obliged to attend it again on Monday. The party was so agreeable, that the young ladies obtained permission to stay till it broke up, and Mr. Sedley also found some attractions he was not inclined to forego.

Miss Sedley was getting much *valuable* information from Miss Latour on the subject of Parisian fashions,

for the benefit of her own maid, and, perhaps, of all the housemaids at Frampton Hall—all the newest patterns of pelerines, and devices of sleeves and flounces. Her sister, under the instructions of Grace, was learning to model figures in a composition only to be got at Paris, of which we shall have more to say hereafter, and was making great progress in painting in *guache*, an art little known in England.

When Emily Vernon, Louisa Grey, and Margaret Sedley, were gone to the schools, the rest of the party (with the exception of Frederic, who went home to *do nothing*, only *pretending* to write letters) walked to view some ruins of which Grace Latour had made a sketch from memory, and she wished, cold as it was, to take another look at them, to ascertain if what she had done was correct.

As Frederic walked from the stable to the house, and from the fire to the window of the library, he could not help wishing that he *could* be amused by such trifles as other people were—was it that he ^{was} wiser, and required something that had more mind in it? Alas, we are compelled to confess that this feeling was not superior *wisdom*, but a sort of selfish fastidiousness

that could not be satisfied without having every thing in the *superlative* degree of excellence, the last manufactory of fashion ; and, above all, producing a degree of excitement that administered to those morbid feelings which made him wretched if he was not the first—the only—person considered.

CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY.

SIR Thomas and Lady Vernon were amongst the number of old fashioned people who lament that the habits of the present day often make evening family prayers *impossible*, for half the under servants in a large establishment are gone to bed before the dining room is cleared. But still they kept to morning prayers.

Their's was the most unostentatious and unobtrusive religion ; it was not mixed up with every dish, nor brought into every topic of conversation, but it was the master spring which pervaded the whole machine ; it was like the main spring of a watch, though concealed from view it extended its influence even to the minute hand. They

had always family prayers of a morning, and those of their visitors who chose to make any inquiry knew what the nine o'clock bell meant.

Of course, Louisa Grey, who had visited at the house from a child, knew where Sir Thomas's congregation assembled, and attended it; but he *imposed* nothing on his visitors, he did his *own duty*, and left them to do theirs; but he often observed, and with a sigh, that Frederic was *never* at morning prayers—he was a bad sleeper, as are most of those who have neither mental nor bodily exercise, and the bell generally rang before he was awake.

But though Sir Thomas had, from necessity, when his house was full of visitors, felt obliged to remit his usual evening prayers, he did not neglect them on a Sunday evening, leaving it to his guests to follow him, or their own inclinations. On this evening, Frederic went, he hardly knew why, in to prayers and sermon, and was accompanied by all the ladies of the party, Sir John, and Mr. Sedley, and Arthur Nugent. During the sermon, Frederic wondered if *he* should ever prevail on himself to read prayers and a sermon to the housemaids and stable boys; and yet he could not help ac-

knowledging, to his own heart, that he never saw his father look to such advantage as when he knelt down in the midst of his numerous household and dependents, gave thanks in the name of all for the blessings they had enjoyed during the week, and earnestly prayed for a continuance of them.

General Dorozenski, and Count Wszebor, were to have left Eastbrooke Park early on Monday morning, but, unfortunately, the paper-mill they went to see, on Saturday, was not at work, as the men had a few days' holidays at Christmas: all that could be seen of the machinery was carefully examined by the General, who, like most Russians, was engaged in some mercantile speculation, and had been very successful with steam-boats. He had now another object in view, and came to England to pick up what information he could. His military appearance, and his numerous orders, deceived the honest manufacturers. They never dreamt that, like his Emperor, and the Duchess of Oldenburg, he was stealing their trades, and, therefore, readily showed him every thing. He understood mechanics, and took advantage of their civility; and Sir Thomas, honest man! understood *hospitality* better than *humbug*, and

entreathed they would prolong their stay till Tuesday, when the paper-mill would certainly be at work ; and as he and Sir John were going to the county town on Monday, where there was not only a *tread-mill*, but the *origin* of those amiable inventions, a donkey wheel, to raise water for the gaol, it was settled that the General and Major MacVenom should accompany the worthy magistrates, on Monday, to Everly, and walk home when their curiosity was gratified.

When the party from the library returned to the drawing-room after prayers, they found those they had left, that is, the foreigners, and Major MacVenom, in a grand discussion on the everlasting topic of the London University, the latter maintaining the advantages of knowledge *without religious principles*, and extolling the *liberality* of that education which was unencumbered with the *prejudices* of mankind, and roundly asserting, in contradiction to sound reason and experience, that those who *selected their own mode of faith* were likely to embrace it with more ardour than those on whom it was imposed in their early years, forgetting the unwillingness of human nature to impose on itself painful restraints, and the probability that, in such a

case, the easiest and shortest way to heaven would be chosen.

Sir Thomas, and his brother baronet, joined the conversation, the former declaring “that he thought worldly knowledge, whatever it might lead to, *worthless*, stripped of the hopes of eternal life, founded on a belief in the gospel;” and his friend, Sir John Sedley, said,

“That the man who did not believe in future retribution, was one he should be loth to trust in the concerns of this world.”

Frederic addressed Louisa Grey, by asking “what she thought on this subject?”

“You had better listen to your father and Sir John Sedley, you will have much better reasoning from them; but a passage in the sermon Sir Thomas has just been reading I think bears very strongly on the point.”

Frederic did not recollect the passage: it would have been wonderful if he had remembered that to which he did not deign to listen: would Miss Grey repeat it?

She did, and with so much proper feeling, that he wondered he had not remarked it. “But his father’s

voice was monotonous, nobody could attend to it long if Miss Grey had read the sermon, in her clear, yet gentle, voice, and impressive manner, he could not have lost a word: how he should like to hear her preach to his mothers Sunday school children!"

But Louisa declared she never preached, she only taught.

"But she must occasionally *lecture*, that was nearly the same thing."

"Very seldom, and perhaps to very little purpose," she replied.

"Then your auditors must have leathern ears, and cold hearts."

"Oh! too much must not be expected from children, especially those of the poor, whose minds are never cultivated at home."

"Then you own," asked Frederic, "that it is cutting blocks with a razor to attempt them;" adding "the respect and admiration he felt for those who could devote themselves to such a hopeless labour, and more especially like it."

"Pray don't call it a *hopeless* labour, Mr. Vernon, you should rather encourage those who undertake it;

by hopes that the precepts they instil, and the habits they enforce, will eventually bring forth good, in the future lives of these poor children ; but I beg you will not run away with the idea that I like it ; on the contrary, there is nothing so irksome to me, as teaching."

" Then why," asked Frederic, " do you perform it so assiduously ? "

" Because I hope I am doing some little good ; and I hope still more, that I am not such a selfish creature as to prefer my own ease to the good, however trifling, of any human being."

" This is not stoical philosophy," thought Frederic, " it must be the genuine doctrine of religion ; for it is new to me : whatever it may be, it is embodied in a very agreeable form ; and what is charming, must, or ought to be true." This internal reflection was made as the ladies left the room for the night.

Frederic was not sleepy, which was extraordinary, after his father's sermon ; he soon dismissed his servant, and, establishing himself very comfortably before the fire, with Vixen at his feet, he began his contemplations : first, by watching the fire, and tracing mountains and human faces, in the coals ; coaxed Vixen, and then

thought of Louisa Grey. She was an extraordinary person, and to be so changed from what her childhood promised, there was something about her he thought hardly *natural*, at her age. Notwithstanding he had been used to his sister, having the same pursuits, at least, *her nature* was not the sophisticated goddess, Frederic worshipped : he at last came to the determination, that it must end in her turning methodist, if she was not one already ; or dying early, she was quite fit for heaven now ! Yet the very moment this last idea had passed in his mind, he severely reproached himself for entertaining it ; how could he be so savage, as even to imagine the death of such an extremely amiable, and it must be acknowledgd, such a very pleasing, person ? He hated himself for the thought ; and could only be reconciled to his own heart, by fervently wishing she might long continue to live, and bless those who knew her, by her simple, unaffected, and unpretending worth and piety. It has been an old, but not less true, observation, that however careless or relaxed in religious principles men are themselves, they still respect women for entertaining stricter and more exalted notions.

Frederic and his dog ruminated till both grew

drowsy, and the former retired to his pillow, and Vixen to establish herself in the deserted arm chair, which her master had just left vacant.

Frederic's pillow was visited with a dream, which we must not call extraordinary, for it was concocted from the transactions of the day, purified by the visionary fantasies of sleep. He thought he saw an immense high rugged mountain ; apparently inaccessible ; on the top of which stood a beautiful, but simple temple of white marble ; with only here and there a slight tinge of discoloration ; looking steadfastly at the portico of this edifice, he saw issue from it a sort of half transparent figure, which approached him, without touching the ground, as Hebe or Iris are often represented, when carrying a message from Jove. Frederic discovered this figure was Louisa Grey, but not of flesh and blood like her, but in a beatified state ; she addressed him with her usual mild tone, and told him she came from the *temple of earthly happiness* to persuade him to win his way to that delightful abode ; from which, when arrived at its summit, he would discern, still higher, a far more transcendantly beautiful temple, which led to *eternal bliss* ; but she

felt bound to impress on him, that, in ascending the hill, towards the first temple, he would encounter an innumerable number of difficulties, and dangers ; but to encourage him to meet these, the ascent thence to the other temple was less difficult, but he must, before he took the first step up the mountain, arm himself with the *staff of resolution* and the *sandals of humility*, which she then offered him ; he accepted in imagination this boon ; but, before he had advanced many steps, he was assailed by a most beautiful but destructive serpent, of such a shape as one might almost imagine Eve's tempter to have assumed.

Whilst contemplating this basilisk, under whose eyes, like that of the fabled monster, its victims seemed to cower, and almost fall into its mouth ; an unlucky mouse ran across the room, it roused Vixen, and by the noise and bustle she made in catching her wretched prey, completely awoke Frederic.

The affair between Vixen and the mouse being over, he attempted to go to sleep again, in the hope of renewing and concluding his dream ; but the bright vision had fled for ever, and snarling dogs and venomous snakes, stinging on all sides, surrounded him till

his servant appeared to call him ; feeling something like a person who has slept under a mosquito net, and is not sure if he has escaped being stung, Frederic shook himself, but a bright beam of sunshine, full in at his window, restored pleasanter thoughts ; and when Louisa Grey entered the breakfast room, his dream returned full on him, and he not only followed her with his eye, but took a place near her at the table.

Whether it was the visions of the night, or the realities of the morning, we are not able to say, but Frederic never appear more agreeable. Grace Latour thought him quite a reformed man, and was rather inclined to patronise him for the day ; but of this he was not ambitious.

Tom Brown, who always attended his levee, informed him that neither carpenter nor smith could attend that day, they were going to a sermon and dinner at their benefit club ; but if he would give his orders to him, or the coachman, they would be about the work very early the following morning.

If the truth must be acknowledged, Frederic was very much cooled respecting the sledge ; it had answered in giving him occupation, he had taken in Mr. Sedley

with his *pair* of skewbalds, though *he* had, to be sure, but a distant view of them, and when he was so wet from his amusement in the moor, he did not approach to examine them.

It was a pretty toy, just to take a turn in the park, but there would be some difficulty in getting it safe to Brighton ; and when there, after a drive along the Steyne and up the West cliff, for a shew off, he should wish to annihilate it, to drive it into the sea, but as that could not be done without his taking the leap with it, and that would not answer, nor like Phaeton's equipage would it vanish in air or fire. No ! he must drive it back again into Brighton, and Wentworth and Hawker and George Neville, and half an hundred more such fellows, would get round him the moment he stopped ; and would, in a second, detect the old canoe and the *painted* horse. Brighton was not to be thought of, he had had his amusement, the only thing was to back out of the business as well as he could.

His father, Sir John Sedley, General Dorozenski, and Major Mac Venom, had gone early to Everly. When breakfast was over, Count Wszebor being thrown on the party, Frederic asked him to walk to the stables,

and give his opinion of the practicability of the sledge going a journey of eighty miles. He decided in the negative, taking into consideration the hilly road between Brighton and Eastbrooke Park. Frederic was delighted by this decision, and, on the Count's asking for directions where to find the ruins of an abbey of which Miss Grace Latour had made so beautiful a sketch, Frederic offered to be his *cicerone*, adding, "these ruins have been the scene of some of my boyish exploits in rat-hunting ; I used to think it capital sport, and if you will wait till I can collect the dogs, and one of our gamekeepers, who acts as rat-catcher-general to the establishment, I will show you a boyish English sport."

The count most readily acquiesced, and whilst waiting for the rest of the party, Plosko came to take his master's directions respecting their journey the following day ; and, hearing the nature of the expedition, implored to be of the party ; this was acceded to, and the Count and Frederic, Vixen, and another terrier, led the van ; the rear was brought up by the rat-catcher, his boy, dogs and ferrets, and Plosko.

The Count was not a man "to travel from Dan to Beersheba and find all barren ;" he had traversed the

Russian dominions from Tobolsk to Astrachan, and gave most amusing accounts of the mode of travelling over the ice plains of Siberia, and the steppes of Russia.

They arrived at their destination before Frederic thought they had proceeded half a mile. The ruins were well worth a visit, for there is hardly a finer specimen of an old abbey in England ; the Count was enchanted, and Frederic easily procured some thatch and hurdles, used by the shepherds for their own shelter, and had them removed to a proper place for the Count to take a sketch under cover.

He then entered into his youthful sport, and was soon joined by Mr. Sedley, who was shooting in the neighbourhood. They had often together dealt destruction to the rats of the ruins, when they were greater friends and better neighbours than now, and if Frederic recollects, with a sigh, the pleasure that place had often afforded him, and asked himself *why* he was so much *happier then?* his companion could have solved the enigma, by saying, you were then young and unsophisticated. This sport displayed a scene for the Count's pencil, and, in addition to the ruins, he made

a sketch of rat-hunting that was not unworthy the pencil of Snyders.

On their walk home, the Count gave such interesting accounts of boar hunts in Poland, the pursuit of bears in Siberia, and some of the field sports he had witnessed in Persia, as made the rat-hunters of England rather sink in their own opinion ; but they regained it by recollecting that in so cultivated and civilized a country as England, no such scenes could take place ; yet the relation was given with great modesty.

CHAPTER VII.

THE magistrates returned to dinner, bringing two additional young men, one of them the younger son of a peer, and, of course, he fell to Miss Latour's share at dinner, and gave Frederic an opportunity of again selecting Louisa Grey, as Mr. Beresford was there for Grace. The exercise of the morning had made Frederic particularly gay, and his agreeableness quite surprised even Louisa.

Music began the evening, but it was succeeded by quadrilles. Now, though Frederic Vernon had been a crack dancer at Almack's, and was always in the *costume quadrilles*, and could dance a whole night at Brighton under the orders of Miss Henshawe, it was very remark-

able, that though a floor, waxed till your feet stuck to it, as if it was covered with bird-lime, never affected him, yet dancing on *a carpet* always brought on the lameness of an old sprain! So he and Major Mac-Venom settled themselves at *ecarté*, and, *not to incommod* the dancers, retired to the inner room, and half shut the folding doors. Those who partook of the evening's amusement were satisfied, and those who did not, were amused by looking on.

The following morning, the foreigners were to set off early, and Major Mac Venom was to accompany them as far as the paper-mill, and then return; but he changed his mind, from feeling a touch of gout which would, he said, prevent his walking over the manufactory. Sir Thomas most good-naturedly took his place ordering his pony to follow him. This party break-fasted early, and, when the remaining guests were assembled, Arthur Nugent supplied Sir Thomas's place and opened the letter-bag, and distributed its contents.

Frederic had three letters: his usual habit was to open them by the fire, and then throw them in the moment he had glanced over their contents. This he did with two, and, after turning the third over several

times, dropped that also into the fender ; but ere it had caught fire, he snatched it up, and in a hurried manner folded, and put it in his pocket. This was not lost on Grace Latour, but she kept her countenance, save a meaning, though unobserved, look at Jane Sedley. Frederic, to avoid suspicion, seated himself at the breakfast table, and attempted to busy himself in assisting Louisa Grey to make coffee, but most unluckily he put a pat of butter into a coffee cup, instead of sugar candy. Louisa, without taking the smallest notice of the mistake, put the cup on one side, and filled another. Frederic felt most grateful to her for not exposing him, and nothing passed for some time that indicated its having been observed ; till Grace asked Arthur if he had seen Cruickshank's last caricatures of *symptoms* ?

“ No ! ”

“ Well then, he must buy them the moment he got to Cambridge. There were first *symptoms* of anger, these she described. *Symptoms* of hunger equally good—and one capital sketch of a gentleman putting butter in coffee to sweeten it ! but she would forbear to say of *what* that was a *symptom*. ”

Frederic was on thorns, but the butler coming in, he desired Tom Brown might wait in the hall till he came out, and as soon as possible escaped ; his retreat was hastened too by hearing that the Eastbrooke gazette, a performance which on the first meeting of the party had been proposed as its finale, was about to be produced ; as the party was to break up in the course of the morning. Frederic had no doubt that amongst the various *jeu d' esprits* that had been put into a box, prepared for the purpose of collecting articles for this gazette, some one would attack him : he determined if possible to avoid the whole thing.

Tom Brown was full of the damage done to the sledge, and the time it would take both smith and carpenter to repair it.

“ Let them make it into ploughshares, if they like, I want no more of it,” said Frederic.

Tom, though a little disappointed that it was not to figure away at Brighton, could not help saying, “ he always doubted its being got safe there, and indeed now the frost was going ; ” his master was too absorbed to attend to what he said, only silenced him by

“ Order me a pair of horses directly from Taunton.”

When servants see that something is going wrong with their masters, it so excites their curiosity, it is not easy to dismiss them. Tom was afraid his honour would not get horses, those for Lady Lucy Latour had been bespoke three days, and it was with great difficulty the landlord of the Swan had supplied four for the general's carriage, indeed two of them had been borrowed in the town, and the beasts did not go together, there was such a run on the road, and such sights of gentry even from Lunnon, going to a grand ball at Lowndes Castle to dance the old year out.

Frederic only knew Tom was speaking, but not its drift, and said peevishly,

“Don’t direct *me*, do what you are bid,” and hurried to his room, and locked his door.

We have heard of silly birds that hide their heads, and fancy their bodies cannot be seen; and of some people, who when they lock their door, imagine they can keep out unwelcome *thoughts*, as well as unwelcome persons. We must present our readers with the contents of Frederic’s letter, and then leave him to read it over and over, till he could make up his mind on the subject. It began

“I am, I believe, taking a very extraordinary step, but I think I know *you* well enough, my valued friend; and *I* have had proof sufficient of the interest you take in my beloved Ag—s to warrant it. She has captivated the Earl of G—, and he has made her a splendid offer. She is *not* much inclined to accept it. Girls have foolish notions about *likes*, and *dislikes*; but I think *I* could *talk* her into it, if *you* told me it was as desirable as it appears to me. Men *know* each other; we poor women only *guess*! The favour I would ask of *you* is *advice*; I know it will be *sincere*, shall I, or, shall I not, finish this match? tell me, is Lord G— much involved in play debts? Perhaps you may be tempted to come to B— and we could converse on these matters. I depend on your secrecy and discretion, and much on *your* influence over Ag—s

Very much yours,

_____”

The post mark was Brighton: Frederic could not for a moment doubt that this letter was from Lady Henshawe. But we must leave him to his comments, and contemplations, and return to the breakfast room, which he so abruptly left, just as the gazette was in the act

of being opened. The materials had been arranged by Grace Latour and Arthur, and a very pretty etching of the house at Eastbrooke was on the front of it. After it had been handed partly round the table, Arthur was desired to read its contents. It began with reflections on the old, and good wishes for the new year, so much in the style of bellmans' verses, they need not to be repeated: then followed

“We have been favoured by a constant correspondent with the following fragment, found on the table of a distinguished foreigner after a visit at a country house in England. ‘Mon Ami ! I must tell to you, as you will all I think of England. Wonderful country ! extraordinary people ! life would not last to tell all they are rich, generous, suspect nothing, receive *us* as if we came to do good unto them, *au lieu*, to get all we can out of their most easy and willing grand mechanics. *Mais pour les dames, ces sont charmantes, lively, gracieuse, small reserve about them.* I have the happiness to know many *charmant spirituelles* ! but if there should be one English lady to drive from my heart, *ma très chère Lavia*, it would be one so precise, so gentle, so

tranquil. I must not say the name. O ! to see her wind her little watch up *precisement a neuf heures !*"

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

We hear that the Earl of G—— is soon to lead to the Hymeneal altar the beautiful and accomplished Miss H——nsh——we. Great preparations are making for these nuptials. The six bride's-maids are to be dressed in white satin, and *tulle*, trimmed with roses. But, as making one heart *blessed*, a score will be *broken*, it has been proposed that the rejected lovers of the lady shall act as bridegroom's men, dressed in *sad* coloured cloaks, and crape hat-bands: this doleful corps is to be headed by the son of a worthy baronet of ——shire, as chief mourner.

"Capital ! capital ! how sorry I am that Mr. Vernon is not here," said Grace, "he could have filled up these blanks, for he knows the parties."

We present our readers with a copy of verses found in Eastbrooke church-yard, the Sunday after Christmas day.

To —————

"Come, thou rosy dimpled boy,
Source of every heart felt joy,
Leave the festive hall awhile,
Deign on humble love to smile.

God of Love ! Oh, hear my prayer,
 Waft it through the ambient air,
 Touch *his* heart who sees my pain,
 Shield me from his cold disdain.

Should he feel what I endure,
 In his heart he'll find its cure,
 Father 'll give me house, and lands,
 And five hundred choice ewe lambs.

If to take me he's inclin'd,
 I shall soon discern his mind,
 One kind look at church will say
 That he's ready. I obey. . . .

Broom Farm.

Rachael Homestead.

Great was the laughter at Arthur, who pleaded guilty to having interrupted the devotion of a farmer's daughter, just come home from boarding school, full of novels and poetry.

ADVERTISEMENT.

“Wants a place as courier, or courier and valet, a native of Poland, perfectly accomplished for either situation ; understands travelling, speaks most European languages ; can dress hair to perfection ; can cut a *beef* steak from a *horse*, dress it, sew up the place, so that the animal is none the worse, excepting in *weight*. Cleans and mends regimentals and boots ; makes good

soup out of old saddles and bridles ; dresses wounds, shaves, shoes horses ; and is particularly famous for dressing and *colouring* them to any shade of match, pie-ball, skewball, &c. For farther particulars enquire at the French Hotel, Leicester Square London.

INTELLIGENCE EXTRAORDINARY!!!!

OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE PUBLIC AT
LARGE !

“ We are most anxious to bring under the eye of the public the most wonderful effect of human invention ever yet discovered ; even in this age of intellect. Our readers have probably noticed some extracts from professor Leslie’s new theory of the earth, in which he proves to *his own* satisfaction and complete demonstration, that the centre of the earth is neither *fire* nor *water* ; neither is it a solid globe, but very much like an apple dumpling, with a good thick crust ; and that where the apple *should be*, is *light, bright, clear, resulgent, light*, none of your oil and resin gas. This curious theory reminds us of an anecdote of our late beloved King George III., who, going into a cottage one day when he was out hunting, saw some round balls of

paste on a table. His majesty said to the woman of the cottage :

“ What ! what—are these ?”

“ Apple dumplings, may it please your majesty.”

“ Apple dumplings ! apple dumplings,” replied the king. “ Why my good woman, how did the apples get in ?”

“ We have no busness where the professor’s light comes from, nor how composed, indeed these conjectures press upon a subject too awful for our columns. We are only anxious to introduce to the notice of the public, and to press upon it, the important *use* it may be turned to. A correspondent has hinted, that by a little extention of Mr. Adie’s boring machine, we might get at this splendid light ; which, of course, freed from its imprisonment, would, like water, rise to the surface of the earth, therefore a small aperture near any great city, would supply abundance of light, for the same must be inexhaustible, so that darkness would be banished from the globe. With a few of these Gephlogistic lights, a simple lamp being sufficient to cover this source, and keep it from unnecessary expansion.

“ But we are now to speak of the still more wonder-

ful purpose to which this Gephlogiston may be applied. A small boiler placed over the lamp would furnish *steam* as inexhaustible as the *light*. A most ingenious mechanist has invented a small, and almost portable, steam engine for the use of private families, upon a variety of scales according to the size of the establishment: this engine will clean plate and knives; wash glasses, lay a cloth, and even ~~wash~~ plates, and remove dishes at dinner; in short, do the work of a butler and three footmen, who have only to look on, and occasionally draw back a slider in the wall; and this, besides saving all their labour, gives them the opportunity of listening to, and profiting by, all the table talk of their master and his guests. Its use in the laundry will be equally complete, and in future no dandy nor exquisite will wear any breast-plate that is not Gephlogistically plaited.

“Cooking apparatus by steam has long been perfect. But the business of the house-maid being more complicated, this machine does not yet work well in that department, but it is hoped it may soon be so improved, that the house-maids may join the laundry-maids in a double subscription to the Library, and no ser-

vant can in future have the slightest pretence to complain of *over work*, as they will have *none* to do.

“ More might be anticipated, but we shall merely inform the public that this useful engine has been invented by a common wheelwright, who can neither read, write, nor cast accounts. He has, it is true, attended all the lectures of the mechanic’s institute, and works under the superintendence of the great philosopher and mechanist, Major M. V.”

This detail had so deeply engaged the attention of Major Mac Venom, that he had let his coffee and muffin get cold before him; being remarkably near sighted, he did not make out that it was read from a very well imitated, but M.S. newspaper, and he had not paid any attention to the preceding articles, from being occupied with a real newspaper. The conclusion was too much! pale with rage, he begged to be allowed to look at the paragraph; folding up the gazette he put it into the fire, and turning to the lady of the house, said,

“ I am sure I have Lady Vernon’s permission, for she is too well bred to allow *her* guests to be ridiculed and insulted.”

For one moment the whole party looked a little aghast, but Lady Vernon, with her usual good humour and tact, said,

“I am sorry Major Mac Venom that you are so displeased with a joke which has already gone half round the table ; and I dare say if you had not destroyed the *Gazette*, *I*, and *my schools*, and *pensioners*, would have come in for our share ; and I hope, I should have joined the laugh even against myself.”

The angry major, though he looked a little ashamed at this amiable and gentle reproof, could only bow, and envy her ladyship her calm and happy temper, and every one else was anxious to finish breakfast.

The ladies had much to wind up. Grace had a last lesson in painting and modelling to give Jane Sedley, and her sister had verses to copy in her album. And Miss Sedley had costumes to colour. Major Mac Venom was preparing to depart, and would have thought himself too happy if he also had gone before breakfast. Frederic was informed, by a knock at his door, that no post horses could be got till the next day ; he therefore magnanimously shut himself up in his apartment for the whole morning. How many

miles he walked in a space of eighteen feet, we are not able to say; but, between pacing up and down the room, lolling in his easy chair, and caressing Vixen, the time passed, if not pleasantly, it certainly ran on. How far his thoughts were agreeable we can only conjecture.

He was at first excessively flattered that Lady Henshawe (for he had no doubt the letter was from her,) should *consult him*. She who well knew every turn and winding in the art of manœuvring; but perhaps she thought *his* presence at Brighton might quicken Lord G——'s ardour, and hasten this desirable marriage! he had no wish to be made a tool of, and perhaps she thought that her letter would rouse any latent passion of his own, and if Agnes was refractory towards Lord G——, Mr. Vernon would step in and carry the day. This was a deep plot, but Lady Henshawe was an experienced plotter, and mistress of finesse to carry any thing through.

Frederic had no desire to be *taken in*; yet his vanity and his *amour propre* were so gratified, and the toils about him so skilfully laid, he had nibbled the bait, though he had not yet swallowed the hook. He

called himself a silly puppy for being so taken a-back, yet he was a sufficiently vain man to be on the very verge of a catastrophe ; had not a small morsel of that sort of prudence that your worldly, or *half* worldly men (for Frederic rather deserved the latter appellation), possess, come to his aid ; and instead of setting off for Brighton, as he first intended, determined he would go to town, where he should meet George Neville, or some one just come from Brighton, who would know how things were going on there ; it would be awkward to go, and find the marriage concluded, especially as he had not made up his mind as to the means of breaking it off.

How seldom mankind are content with their lot ! amongst other things, Frederic wished he was not an only son

“ I am sure there are great disadvantages belonging to it, they are made such a dead set at, by manœuvring mothers ! ”

And yet many a little midshipman the first night he passes in his narrow birth, or a young soldier on his first bivouac, wishes it had pleased heaven that they had been *first born*, these were *real* disadvantages that

did not enter Frederic's imagination. Elder and only sons are too precious to be put in any dangerous professions, and too rich for a learned one; great estates, even in prospect, prevent the necessity for the intellectual application of those who are to have them: it may be said

“ Coldly they'll toil for learning's prize,
For why should he that's rich be wise ?”

CHAPTER VIII.

WHERE a man is an hereditary legislator, he may be tempted to try to make a figure in the House of Commons, before he votes by proxy in the Lords. All baronet's sons are not in parliament, and Frederic was not, neither he, nor Sir Thomas particularly wished it—it brought with it county quarrels.

Tired of his room, Frederic took a stroll in the park, where he met Henry Sedley, returning from shooting, loaded with wild fowl.

He stopped Frederic with “ I wonder you and your father do not plant out that moor, and those ragged cottages: if you put pine firs behind, and other trees

in front, you would have something ornamental, and eventually profitable."

"Very likely," said Frederic, "but I never enter into those things, I dare say my father, who does, will be very much obliged by your hints, and profit by them."

Mr. Setley whistled his dogs, he had no wish to intrude his advice, and returned homewards, wondering how any man could be so indifferent about his own future property.

Frederic held him in great contempt, called him Squire Hawthorn, but he deserved a much better name. He was certainly very fond of shooting, but he liked it as a manly exercise, not a fastidious pleasure: he walked after his game, and alone, he had no taste for battûs, he would as willingly have fired into the poultry yard. He liked hunting moderately, occasionally joined a neighbouring pack of fox hounds, but never envied those who risked their necks and their fortunes with the Quorndon hunt. Agriculture was his passion, and his father resigned the home farm to him: he cultivated it like a gentleman, more for *improvement* than profit. He made experiments farmers could not afford; was more choice than

they could be in the breed of his farming stock; and, above all, his greatest attention was directed to planting and improving the estate. His father, who was infirm and gouty, loved to calculate what would probably be the value of the timber his grand or his great grandson might cut down.

Henry Sedley took great pains in altering and improving farm-houses and labourers' cottages, and changing their situations, to those more convenient and ornamental, at the same time considering the comforts of their respective tenants: he went among the labourers, and into their cottages, knew the size of their families, and their wants, his ear was ever open to their difficulties, and distresses.

The living was in his father's gift, and intended for one of his younger brothers; it was now in possession of a very old man, who had been Sir John Sedley's tutor, he of course resigned much of the parish management to Mr. Sedley, who looked after the poor-house, kept the churchwardens and overseers in order, and occasionally filled those offices himself. He was strict to the poor, as respected their *conduct*; lenient to their *wants*, and generally beloved by them; because, as they truly said, "he was just in all he did."

His father offered to bring him into parliament; but he had no taste for London, and declined the offer in favour of a younger brother, who was destined for the bar, and likely to distinguish himself at it. Mr. Sedley promised to be, that now rare character, an *English country gentleman*. He was happy, because he was *useful*, and for that reason he was respected and beloved.

But Frederic despised him, said he did not know the world, *i. e.* he did not know the *town*, the luxuries and vicious haunts of London and Paris, the pernicious scandal of their clubs and saloons, or the idle trifling of Brighton. Poor Frederic Vernon fell into a usual error. He thought *his little set* mankind. Yet it galled him to see his neighbour more cheerful, more self-possessed, than himself, without reflecting that this sort of satisfaction arose wholly from the consciousness of doing his duty by *others*; not indulging *his own* exclusive and selfish gratification. By making himself *useful*, he had an applauding conscience. Had Frederic such?

He returned after his walk in the park to his own room till dinner time, as usual, with nothing

to do, and certainly to do nothing. At dinner he had such an excessively bad head ache as excited Lady Vernon's maternal anxiety, though without the smallest reason; but that, together with letters to write, were excuses for his retiring to his room; though he could hardly have chosen a less pleasant companion than his own thoughts. Before he left the party he offered Arthur a *cast* to town next day, which was gladly accepted.

He could not prevail on himself to appear next morning, to witness the adieus of the party; the regrets at its breaking up, and the hopes that the members of it might sometime and somewhere meet again. When Frederic was in his carriage, he sent to Arthur to join him, but the former was so little inclined to converse, that even Arthur's volubility was at fault.

After some miles had been travelled in silence, the latter ventured to *hint* at the *Gazette*, and wished Frederic had staid to hear it; some things were capital; but above all, Mac Venom's passion was *superb*.

Frederic, listened, and then fell into his reverie, and was only roused from it by Arthur's saying,

“ He thought Miss Grey the most good-natured person he ever saw.”

To this Frederic agreed, but his companion went on in a tirade on Grace Latour. Frederic called her “a little spiteful devil.”

“Mr. Sedley does not think her so,” replied Arthur.

“I don’t care what Henry Sedley thinks,” said Frederic, “I wish him nothing worse than such a wife, if he chooses to take her.”

“Oh!” returned Arthur, “you are too hard on her; she only likes a little fun, and has a true taste for a joke; but I see you do not like those sort of jokes.”

Yet for all this, Arthur could not help recurring so often to the *Gazette*, and gave such broad *hints*, that the secret of the skewbald horse was made known, that Frederic, fretted beyond what his present mood would endure, with more than usual ill humour said :

“If you cannot be quiet, Arthur, I must order a chaise for you at the next inn, or leave you on the highway, for I am not well, indeed I am going to town for *advice*, and must be quiet.”

Arthur acquiesced, and no more conversation took place, till the lights of London appearing, he was set down at his uncle’s, in Charles-street, and Frederic, at

Stevens's, where he found several Meltonians in the coffee-room, speculating on the thaw, and proposing to go at once into Leicestershire.

Frederic said, "he had business to keep him a day or two in town;" but he got the last Newmarket news, and much other equally *important* information, though not exactly what he wanted to know: yet he never left the room till he went to bed, which was early; for he had had two harrassing days, at least so they appeared in his nothing-to-do sort of life.

The next morning the different papers, and John, the waiter, at Stevens's, who is a perfect town Gazette, lasted till it was time to go out. He went after George Neville, but he was not to be found. He had just been on guard, but was now off, but neither at the Guards club-house, nor at the United service club, could he be found, though he had just been at both places.

Frederick met with others, and time wore away; his last inquiry at George Neville's lodgings gave the most accurate information. He was gone with a detachment to the Tower, and, after depositing his men, would set off by the Leeds mail for Melton. This

was hopeless ; Frederic would have as soon gone to Australia as to the Tower, so he turned his steps towards Stevens's ; but in Regent-street met, on the arm of a friend, Ned Hawker. We ought rather to say, the Rev. Edward Hawker, for he had, in his own phrase, “ just been *single japanned*,” and was very likely to turn out the clergyman Cowper describes—

“ Frequent in park, with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes.”

The usual “ How are you ?” and “ Where do you come from ?” passed.

“ Brighton,” was the answer.

“ What going on there ?”

“ Oh nothing ! upon my soul I never was so dull.”

“ What ! no flirtation or marriages ?”

“ None in the world.”

“ But the lovely Agnes ! what is she doing ?”

“ Like all the rest, *nothing*, only she looks more divinely than ever, and rides the cleverest horse in the world most capitally ; I don’t think there is a better horsewoman in England.”

Nor a better horse, thought Frederic, for it was his own choicest hunter he had lent her.

“ But I forget,” said Hawker, “ they left Brighton above a week ago, and are gone to spend Christmas somewhere, I forget where ; and, faith ! I believe it was the loss of Lady Henshawe’s dinners, and Agnes’ smiles, that made Brighton so dull.”

They parted, and Frederic, on his way to his hotel, pondered on this account of Brighton, and of Lady Henshawe and her daughter, and he was puzzled to the greatest degree. When arrived at Stevens’s, and safe in his room, he took out the letter, the post mark was certainly *Brighton*, though it was a little blotted. Yet, according to Hawker’s account, they were not there, and he said nothing about Lord G——’s attentions. He must find him out again, and elicit something more on the subject. But he did not know Hawker’s lodgings, and he was such an any-where-ian he hardly knew where to look for him. At last he recollect ed the University Club, and having heard Hawker say, “ he sometimes shewed himself there ; it told with his father, and was next to being at church,” Frederic too belonged to the University Club, to please his father ; but frequented it so little that he was unknown to any of the waiters, who eyed him with en-

quiring curiosity whenever he paid an accidental visit there.

He hurried his dinner, drank his claret in a tumbler, and went to the University Club ; but he could hear little that was satisfactory of Hawker, excepting, that he had been there the day before, and perhaps might call again, as some one else had been there to enquire after him, and there were two letters for him.

Frederic went up stairs, found a good fire, and threw himself on a sofa by it. Opposite were two grave looking men, not absolutely *big-wigs*, but approaching to that dignity. At first he could not imagine what they were, but after a little observation, concluded they must be lawyers. Wanting to get rid of his time and his reflections, Frederic listened to their conversation, which, as it was in a public room, could not be considered as intended for *private*. They were discussing the merits of Lord John Russell's newly come out book. One of them said :

“ I must own I perfectly agree in opinion with a popular journal, that it is highly creditable to the present age, that men in that high class of life join themselves to the ranks of literature. The old idea

that an author must live in a garret in Grub Street, and write with *duns* at his door, and his ink in a broken tea cup, is quite done away with. Pens are now dipped in silver inkstands, and books written in splendid libraries, and certainly they are so written under greater advantages than in a garret, for whatever book an author in a library wants to consult, or refer to, he has it at hand. I think, besides Lord John Russell and Mr. Agar Ellis, I counted *ten* more of the same rank in society, whose books were this day advertised in the Times. We need not, as the journal I have just quoted observes, be afraid of the mechanics, with their institute, growing too wise, the upper ranks are still keeping their places even in literature."

" You have," replied his companion, " enumerated the advantages that the public may derive from such a fashion, but you have omitted what the individuals themselves gain by the employment, how much they increase their own happiness by *mental* occupation; they enjoy all the pleasures, and but few of the pains, of authorship; their rank in life produces them readers, and a certain degree of fame, both in their own caste, and with the public, if it is only for writing a mediocre

novel. And from much of the pains of an author they are exempt : for *profit* is an object of no importance.”

“ I hardly know if I agree with you, that a lordly author has no pains,” said his companion. “ Byron was no example of this, though he may be said to have led the way to noble literature.”

“ You must not take Byron as an *example*, but as an exception,” replied the other : “ he had that morbid imagination, and that diseased temperament, he must have quarrelled with mankind, let him have taken what line he would. Even, if a book written by an idle lord or commoner was burnt three days after it was published, I should hold, that the employment had been a blessing to its writer, for I quite agree in opinion that

‘ He who digs the mine for bread,
Or ploughs that others may be fed,
Feels less fatigue than that decreed
To him who cannot think or read.’ ”

This observation roused Frederic from a resting, to an erect, posture, he continued listening, when the last speaker went on with,

“ We who are obliged to drudge at head work, can imagine the pleasure of being able to select the intellectual occupation most agreeable to our particular taste, but here comes one who can tell us if the pleasures or pains of authorship predominate.”

They were joined by a cheerful looking man with a bright, intelligent eye. He was in reality the author of several works in which the incidents of the novel and deep reasoning had been combined. Upon their referring the question to him, he said

“ None of your quizzing, gentlemen, on us poor authors ! ” yet he owned he had no more agreeable recreation from the tedious routine of office than letting loose his imagination when he got to his own fire-side, and dipped his pen in ink, but added, with a sigh ; “ my fire-side had lost its best and dearest embellishment, before I took to scribbling ; I should have preferred conversation,” but, as if wishing to drive away a painful subject, said, “ I must have some tea to clear my head, let it be *green*, waiter ! ”

“ I should have thought,” said one of his acquaintance, “ that coffee would have been more exhilarating.”

“ You are right, when excitement is wanted, coffee

is the best, but, like landanum, when it is drank freely, it leaves something next day not easily shaken off, without strong exercise, which I have no time to take ; but I do occasionally drink it."

"When you have a *murder* in hand I suppose ! Fare you well!" and the party separated.

Frederic soon after left the room, he was tired of waiting for Hawker, and some new ideas had started up in his mind, that drove Brighton a little out of his thoughts.

Going out, he asked the porter, who those two gentlemen were ? the man named two of the most distinguished lawyers of the day. Their conversation had made no slight impression on Frederic. On his way to Stevens's, he stopped at the Library, and asked for Lord John Russell's book.

"Do you mean the last sir ?"

"Are there more ?"

"Yes, two volumes, and some smaller things, particularly a little book on the English constitution."

Frederic was rather surprised how a lord could find time to write so much ; but ordered them all to be sent to Stevens's.

When he arrived there, he retired to his room without one look into the coffee room. He rang for Jackson, ordered his coffee, which he could drink made by no one else.

A sick person always catches eagerly at a new medicine, and those mentally diseased have the same propensity. Frederic wondered if he could like *real reading*; he fancied he did, in some degree, because he *looked* at the papers and *turned over the leaves* of such a very celebrated novel as Pelham. Perhaps *want* of mental occupation might be his disease; he recollects once asking the family apothecary if he could recommend him any draught or pill for sleepless nights, the old man's answer was,

“If Mr. Vernon would employ half the day in bodily exercise, and the other half in mental exertion, he would sleep better than with any drug out of his shop.”

Perhaps he was right. Frederic would try the experiment this very night. He could read all this evening, and on his road to Melton to-morrow; and if he did not like the books, they would look very creditable in his father's library. During these reflections he sipped his coffee.

‘ Coffee that makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half shut eyes.’

In Frederic’s last sip, he recollect ed having heard his sister express a wish to read Montgomery’s Omnipresence of the Deity, and as the books he had ordered were just arrived, he desired Jackson to pay for them, and, writing down the title of the book he wanted in addition, sent the shop-boy back for it.

Jackson was not much used to unpack *books* for his master, he hesitated, and asked if they were for Sir Thomas ?

“ No ! undo them, and put them here, and bring me some more coffee.”

Jackson looked incredulous ; to drink two dishes of coffee was so plebeian, he thought his master must have forgotten he had already had *one*, and, with an odd sort of doubtful bow, said he had made only one, that is to say, *one* for his master, and two for himself, which he had drank..

“ Get some more, and don’t talk,” was Frederic’s reply, adding, “ has any body been to Charles

Street, with my message to Mr. Arthur Nugent?"

Jackson would enquire: and he brought for answer, "that Mr. Nugent would call in a few minutes; but was then at dinner, and going afterwards to an early ball." What a fool! thought Frederic—merely because he wanted him.

The second dish of coffee, unfashionable as it might be, did wonders in clearing Frederic's intellects; and he began to fancy some sort of hoax had been played on him; but this was no very agreeable reflection, and he drove it away, by recollecting the pleasures of intellectual occupation, as described by the lawyers, and cutting the leaves of Lord John Russell's book.

Montgomery's poem arrived, and was just laid on the table when Arthur entered: before he answered a question from Frederic, who was considering how to make the enquiry he wished, without exposing himself, he took up Montgomery, saying,

"Oh, a present for Miss Grey!"

"A present for Miss Grey!" exclaimed Frederic, "how can you be such an unlicked cub, do you think I could make a present to Miss Grey?"

“ I did not think about it,” replied Arthur, “ but perhaps your sister can for you : I only recollect just then how very good natured Miss Grey had been about the model, and I fancied you might make some little acknowledgement.”

Frederic would have given worlds to know what this piece of good nature was ; but it was a foolish piece of curiosity, and there was something in Arthur’s manner that told him he would laugh at him. So he restrained this curiosity, and determined to be on the *cautious* side.

“ Well ! what do you want me for, Frederic ?”

“ Only to ask you if you recollect what day *you* were the opener of the post bag ? ”

“ Why, Tuesday, to be sure, the day we had all the fun about the Gazette, and Mac Venom, and we should have had a little laugh against you, as well as the rest, only you turned sulky and would not stay.”

“ The Devil you would !” And pray, may I ask what you wiseacres in council had found to quizz *me* for ? ” writhing at the moment under the dread of hearing it.

“ Don’t be in a fuss, my good fellow ! only a small

joke about the sledge, which was never read, because that savage brute, Mac Venom, burnt the thing; but I believe all the originals are still preserved, and then that fudge about Brighton, and Lord G—— and Miss ——you know who!"

It was not a ray of light that dawned on Frederic, it was broad day, a full flash of conviction, and, seizing Arthur tight by the arm, that he might not escape, he demanded fiercely if he knew any thing of *his* letters having been opened. "For, by Jove, I believe you were a set of folks that would stick at nothing to make a joke!"

Arthur could not resist a little tantalizing: he said "he would vouch for the whole party, that no such dis-honourable thing was even thought of, but he must go, he was to accompany his cousins to a child's ball, and they were to be there early, and he must put on a fresh tie."

Frederic locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

"Heyday!" said Arthur "what are we to have, supper and pistols for two? If that's your plan, Frederic, let us have Jackson and John the waiter in to see fair play: I don't like fighting across the table without witnesses."

“Don’t be a fool, Arthur,” replied Frederic, only if you really wish to escape being thrown out at the window, and picked up by the watchman, tell me *all* you know of those infernal contrivances which you call *fun*, and which that *she Fiend*, Grace Latour, was at the head of?”

“Speak more respectfully of our worthy confraternity, or I will tell you nothing.”

Arthur said this with so determined an air, that Frederic relaxed his hold on his arm, and, after some silence, on Arthur shewing impatience, and resolution to go, Frederic said,

“Now, Arthur, be a good fellow, tell me all you know, and I will give you a day’s hunting at Melton, and mount you capitally.”

“Well, since you are reasonable, and generous to boot, the letter you got that morning with the Brighton post mark, was fabricated amongst *us*, and copied either by Jane Sedley, or Grace Latour, I forget which.”

“The devil it was! And how came you to imagine its extraordinary contents?”

“Why, Miss Sedley, had a letter from a friend at Brighton, who amongst news, said *that* ‘Lady Hen-

shawe was trying to draw in Lord G——, for her daughter, but that her success was doubtful. And added, what will your neighbour, Mr. Vernon, say to this, for he has been most devoted in that qnarter? And will his horse be returned, if this marriage takes place ?

Frederic stamped on the ground, kicked the tables, and even poor little Vixen. Seeing Arthur move to the door, he threw the key on the ground ; but recollecting, as Arthur's hand was on the lock, that he might as well have the whole ; he again stopped Arthur, saying,

“ Let me know the bottom of this Hecate cauldron, before you unlock the door ; what was the history of the model ? ”

“ Only that Grace Latour, who models beautifully, had made the most capital and perfect model of *your sledge* and the *skewbalds*, and it was to have been placed in the centre of the dessert ; but she had been a little mischievous, painted the horses in large black patches covered with red spots. Your sister was much hurt at this, and found that the French maid, belonging to the Misses Latour, was great friends with Plosko,

and that the secret was known throughout the house. Emily did not know what to do, to save *you* from the laugh, but Louisa Grey persuaded Grace not to produce it; but give it to her to send into Scotland, for a new year's present to her little cousin; and I have got it in charge to send it."

Frederic unlocked the door, and Arthur departed, leaving his cousin to his own thoughts. To have been the laughing stock of the party was too enraging! and yet a moment's reflection would have told him he was not the only one. They had each a joke against the other, and laughed them off! But they were silly folks! and not so susceptible as he was—had not, he should have said, so large a share of *self-love and vanity*; but his conscience did not use these strong terms. He had a little, he believed, of Lord Byron's morbid disposition! He could not help it—it was *nature's* fault, not his own. It suddenly struck him how he should like to have this model of the sledge! it might be of use, on some future occasion.

Don't suppose, gentle reader, he cared for it because it was connected with Louisa Grey! But he instantly sent off to Arthur, intreating to see him again, only for

one moment. Arthur deposited his cousins at their ball, and then returned to Stevens's on this pressing message.

“ Well, Frederic, what is your worship’s pleasure? you don’t seem to have any inclination to consult mine.”

“ Upon second thoughts,” said Frederic, “ a day’s hunting is not worth coming from Cambridge for, I’ll give you a *week* at Melton, standing all expenses, if you will give into my charge the *model* you have got to send to Miss Grey’s little cousins.”

“ You bribe high, Frederic, but before I am tempted to commit a *breach of trust*, let me know what you mean to do with this same model.”

“ Why simply *exchange* it, and you know exchange is no robbery, I will send the little boy the most beautiful toy in Laurie’s shop. A coach and six if you please. Only let *me* have the model.”

“ Well! Well! I’ll consider of it, and let you know in the morning.”

“ That will not do, I must go out of town very early in the morning.”

“ Where?”

“ To Melton, I believe.”

"Or to Eastbrooke, I *suspect*," said Arthur "you know the *whole* party is not broken up, there is still Mrs. Elenor Latour and —————"

He shut the door. Frederic was left to his own reflections, those could not be shut out. Was he, or was he not, a miserable, ill used, person? He had that evening learnt a secret of happiness—intellectual occupations, and intellectual pleasures, were of the highest order. Should he make the trial? Jackson entered.

"It freezes hard again, Sir, the streets are as slippery as glass, all the Melton gentlemen have countermanded their post horses and places in the mails. No hunting, Sir!"

This turned the balance, which hung on a straw. Frederic would go to Eastbrooke, he should find Louisa Grey there, he might "catch fresh virtue from *her* eye." The frost was the excuse. He asked Jackson what the church bells were ringing for?

"To ring the old year out and the new one in."

"The new year!!! I am sure," said Frederic mentally "the old one has not been a good one to me, I have been the dupe of an artful mother, and nearly a sacrifice

to her mercenary daughter. And I have made myself a laughing stock to some giddy girls and boys, by pretending to be too wise to be amused by trifles. I *may* have done more, and made myself despicable in the eyes of *one*, remarkable for *nice discernment*, and *right feeling*! At least it is worth while to try some other plan. I shall get credit with the wise, if I read, and I may get some amusement too."

With this resolution, when the annoying bells ceased, he went to bed, not to sleep, but to think on the extraordinary turn things had taken. He was afraid to probe his own heart, yet "a small still voice that whispers unforbidden in our ears," told him, that the two people he knew in the world, that were the happiest, were Mr. Sedley, who was always *actively* and *usefully* employed, and Louisa Grey, who was ever promoting the happiness of *others*, wholly forgetful of *herself*.

The next morning Arthur came, and found Frederic with a table covered with all the contents of Laurie's shop, in the shape of mail coaches, tandems, &c. Arthur selected one, placed it in the box destined for the model, and depended on Frederic for making his peace with Miss Grey.

The chaise was at the door, but Frederic still waited for a book ; for another copy of Montgomery's poem, the *best bound* that could be got. It arrived.

"What, two books of the same sort," exclaimed Arthur, "are you going to set up a bookseller's shop, Frederic?"

"No ! but my sister sometimes likes to make a new years' present ; so I have got an additional one for that purpose."

"Fare ye well, Frederic!" said Arthur, "I see it is very *bad* with you," and he disappeared.

All that is necessary to add, is, that besides buying two copies of the poem, Frederic read it twice over, once to his sister and Louisa Grey, profiting by their remarks. And once more to himself.

And we should not wonder if the *dream* came true, and that by the help of Louisa Grey, not as a spirit, but in her own natural person, she led Frederic Vernon to the *Temple of Earthly Happiness*, and paved his way to the one *above*.

COUNTRY HOUSES.

EASTER HOLIDAYS,

AT

STOKE PARK.

CHAPTER I.

In Britain's Isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands,
The *Hunsduns*, and the *Buttons* there
Employ'd the power of fury hands.

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each panel in achievement clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
Cold passages that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he'd full fifty winters o'er him,
My grave *Lord Keeper* led the brawls,
The seal and maces danced before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green
His high crown'd hat, and satin doublet,
Mov'd the stout heart of England's queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not touch it.

“Walls have ears,” says the proverb, and voices too sometimes—it is well not always, or strange histories might be told; and characters that stand high in historic recollection, might sink an hundred per cent. in the scale.

The ancient mansion of Stoke Park, which has so

often been the seat of fêtes and gallantry in other days, and, by another name, was about to become again conspicuous in the same way ; and, however the sticklers for the refinements of the present day may deride the coarser amusements and grosser pageants of the Elizabethan age, the same taste for theatrical representation still prevails, and, perhaps, ever will. Thespis, in his cart, pleased the refined Grecians. The broader humours of Maid Marian, and mock tournaments, shewed the taste of the warlike English queen.

What we of the nineteenth century have gained in refinement, we have lost in zest and mirth. The fine ladies, and exquisite dandies of the present day, if they are not great frequenters of public theatres, take infinite pains to act the parts of valets and abigails before their own servants and tenants, and gain their applause, as well as that of their equals. Perhaps, could they accompany the family of the farmer to his fire-side, or listen to the comments of the housekeeper's room, or servants'-hall, they would learn a useful lesson.

Two carpenters were busily employed on the wainscoating of an old-fashioned room, when one of them, on a high pair of steps, said—

“ Do, Tom, give me a stronger chisel, for something resists this here, and I’d be loth to break this old boy, for he has served me many a year, and well, too !”

Whilst his companion was searching in his basket for another tool, he on the ladder, said—

“ Never mind, the wainscot has given way, but, by jingo, we’ve got something here, and my name is not Wilson, if we hav’ent found concealed treasure ! ”

“ Halves,” cried his companion.

“ Not so fast, I am the finder ; but, however, not to get into any scrape, do you come up, and see what’s here, and we can settle shares by and bye—one thing I must say, that whosoever made this hiding-place was a clever fellow, for the devil himself would hardly have guessed any thing but a thick wall was behind here ; but I see now I might have spared my favourite chisel, for here is a little bit of a spring, which, if my eyes had been a little sharper, I might have found out ; though it seems so rusty, it will not give way, so it’s all for the best.”

“ Don’t go on with your gibberish,” said the other, “ you are always so proud of your knowledge ; let’s see what it has brought out ; nothing but old musty papers, I’m bound”—

Several bundles of letters were produced ; they were tied neatly round with silk, and, though all were perfectly dry, the silk had lost its original colour.

“ Put your arm in farther, man, or let me, who have a longer one.”

“ No, no ! I found the hole, and will search it ;” and after a little groping, Wilson exclaimed—“ here is the treasure at last !” and produced a casket about six inches long, of black shagreen, and bound with massy silver bands, with a lock and hinges of the same kind ; but their curiosity was foiled, for the lock was strong, and there was no key ; they searched in vain for one.

Neither of the finders ventured to break the lock. Perhaps to the *lightness* of the casket was owing its safety, and their integrity ; for the handling promised nothing like coin.

“ But, perhaps,” said Tomkins, “ there may be jewels ; they are not so heavy as money, or may be bank notes.”

“ Them gentry were not in fashion with this casket, I guess,” was the reply ; “ don’t you know the Bank of England was not set up till 1696 : why what’s the use of lending you the Library of Useful Knowledge if you know nothing about currency, and such like.”

"Never mind these sort of things now," said Tomkins, "we had better see if we can turn the contents of this here trunk into somewhat that'll pass current at the George."

"I'm thinking" said Wilson, "what's best to be done."

"Go directly with it to my lord," replied Tomkins, "or you may get on the wrong side of the post, I can tell you; for father once got into jail for three weeks, for only just keeping a few musty old coins till he could find out their value, for he knew the old hunks on whose premises he found them would give him nothing; and, as it was, he got nothing but his release. I advise you to find out the butler, and tell him what we have found."

"No, no!" said Wilson, "Martin is an old rogue, or I know nothing, he'll sift it all out, and get the reward himself; I owe him a turn for his shortening our allowance of ale to serve himself, so I'll be up with him now; he shall take *us* to my lord, but he shall have no guess what we are going about."

With the letters, and casket concealed under his jacket, Wilson sought out Martin, and told him, he and his companion *must* see my lord.

“ What for ? ” asked the important butler, “ can’t you send your message by me : my lord is at breakfast, and will not be disturbed.”

“ He would be disturbed if he knew what we wanted,” replied Wilson.

“ And pray what may that be ? ”

“ That’s more than I intend to tell you, so do as you like, if we wait till his lordship, or my lady come to look at our work, it may be worse for you ; for if it is late in the day we shall tell my lord that *you* would not let us see him.”

This threat had the desired effect, and Martin trudged doggedly on through innumerable passages, followed by the carpenters, till they reached the habitable and inhabited part of the house, where the owners were at breakfast.

And here we must take leave to observe, that there is no surer sign of a good understanding between husband and wife, in high life, than their breakfasting together ; it is almost the only time they are sure of a quiet *tête-a-tête* ; and if we, old stagers, might presume to advise in such a delicate case, we would recommend young wives to sacrifice their own indolence and comfort, and make breakfast *even* on hunting

mornings—hounds do not meet at day-break, as they used to do, and ladies may be assured the sacrifices are well worth making. Husbands, and indeed most people, are in their best humour early in a morning; the vexations or excitements of the preceding day have been slept off; and those of the approaching one are still in embryo. Indeed, in London, it is often the only leisure time for domestic arrangements; committees in the house, clubs, and Tattersall's, take up the morning, the House, assemblies, and operas engross the evening; and, in the country, hunting, shooting, farming, and neighbouring dinners, equally take men from home; so we hope our fair countrywomen will take a hint, and duly appreciate the quiet domestic hour of breakfast.

With a sort of sulky air, Martin opened the door of the breakfast room, saying, “ Wilson must speak with my Lord.”

Lord Tintern seeing the carpenters behind the speaker, said “ Let them come in.”

They did so; but Martin lingered with the door in his hand.

“ Well, Wilson, what do you want? are you in any difficulty?”

“ Yes, please ye, my Lord.”

“ What is it?”

Wilson cast an eye towards the butler, which plainly said, “ when *he* is gone I will tell you.”

Lord Tintern perceived this, and said, “ You need not wait Martin, Wilson knows his way back.” His curiosity thus foiled, he shut the door less gently than usual.

Wilson then drew the casket and packets from his bosom, told how they had been found, and after a little hesitation, added, “ I hope your Lordship will remember the finder.”

“ What, then! you suppose you have a prize? but it is very light; however, you shall have fair play, and we will see what it contains: did you find no key?”

“ None my lord, and we searched the place thoroughly.”

“ Have you any instrument that will open it?”

Wilson had taken the precaution to bring one; and it easily yielded to his chisel.—But when opened only two small cases, each containing a picture; and two smaller packets with each a lock of hair, and a very small gold coin broke in halves; were all its contents.

“ I fear, my good fellows,” said Lord Tintern,

“ your *treasure trouvé* is of small value, perhaps the letters may tell whose are the portraits.”

But on looking at them, one packet was in a manly hand directed to Araminta, and the other in a delicately small female one, inscribed to Christobel.

“ I don’t think love letters, for such they seem to be, will yield you, my men, much profit, though they might be turned to some account in the hands of the great Scotch author, but here is a sovereign for you, which I fancy is something more than any Jew broker would give you for these pictures, or the silver of the casket, and take my word for it, if they turn out worth more, or find an owner, you shall have the advantage of it.”

The carpenters took the money and withdrew; and though a quarter of an hour before they would have thought it great good luck to divide a sovereign between them, so quickly had imagination magnified the prize they had found, that they returned to their work disappointed, to find themselves only twenty shillings the richer for the adventure. Imaginary wealth is always boundless, nothing short of Aladdin’s lamp.

When alone, Lord and Lady Tintern examined the portraits, both were handsome, that of the gentleman young, and with short dark hair, a pointed beard, and

high ruff, in the costume of the age of Elizabeth.—That of the lady was a delicate, fair beauty, and it had probably suffered most from time ; it had a faded look, yet a sweet expression of countenance,—mild blue eyes and auburn hair, almost approaching to red, but classic red. The dress was that of an Arcadian shepherdess.

“ I wonder,” exclaimed Lady Tintern, “ if this man is Sir Christopher Hatton : I do think I have seen a portrait of him, when young, like it ; but who is the lady ? ”

“ We have not time now to develope this mystery,” said Lord Tintern, “ perhaps when Fitz-Gibbon comes, he loves old musty legends, he will help us.”

“ I am quite ready to defer it,” replied Lady Tintern, “ for I have such a provoking letter, I am ready to die with vexation—would you believe it ! My absurd prosy old uncle, will not, after all, let Olivia act ; he sends me a fine rigmarole ; ‘ that on consideration, he does not think it becoming a young woman of rank, to personate any character but her own, and especially a plebeian, and ridiculous one, quite rubbish.’ ”

“ Never mind, abusing Lord Montresor will not help you now, Gertrude ; you can do that, as you have done it a hundred times before, at your leisure ; and, to own the truth, I don’t think he is so much out of the

way in the present instance, as he has often appeared in others ; I don't think I could, or ever will, let Adelaide or Sophia take any part in private theatricals—one must conform to the times we live in, so it is as well to have them as any other amusements for our friends ; but I cannot imagine a very refined and delicate girl, such as I should wish a daughter of mine to be, to like to produce herself before a large audience as a *soubrette* ; or, if she did it well, to be the very elegant-minded person I should hope my daughter would be."

"You really are growing quite old and fogram, I fear."

"Not at all ; there are dozens of women I could name, who might act Madelon and Cathos without in the least annoying me. Mrs. Delamour, for example, but I do think Olivia Dalrymple is too good to be so hackneyed."

"But how, in this late stage of the business, are we to get a substitute ; and one who speaks as good French, we shall hardly find."

"Oh, that does not signify *les precieuse Ridicules* were only bourgeois, what think you of my agent Legh's daughter, she is a very pretty girl ; you may remember having seen her at the Reading races, she has had an education, as I think, above her sphere ; and her father will be delighted (no doubt) to introduce her

amongst us: but this I must premise, that she is taken good care of, put her under Gevois' care, or take her especially under your own; I will not, for her father's sake, for he is an honest, good fellow, have her talked nonsense to by any of the dandies or beaus our theatricals may attract."

"That shall be cared for, only let us get at this Miss, and recollect, my lord, if I find her inefficient, *you must take the blame, as well as the trouble.*"

"I will write to her father immediately, and we must take care of these old letters. Who knows but the scenes we are now about to act at Stoke Park may furnish packets for future ages?"

"You mean," said Lady Tintern, "do you not, that the tenants and servants should see us?"

"I have no choice, it has been done elsewhere, and they expect it. Blunt passed me yesterday, and doffing his hat to the ground, 'hoped my lordship would let him and his see the play, for his daughter thought of nothing else.' I told him I feared it would not amuse them, as it was a French play, he said 'never mind, it will be something to see, and they will remember it all their lives: he dared to say it would be as good as *Harlequin and Mother Goose*, which he had seen at Bedford,

so you see, Gertrude, how high your performance is rated! Perhaps of *The Critic* they may have some comprehension; and if they have not, with a nearly expiring parliament, it is not a time to put freeholders out of humour, so you must fix your dress rehearsal as soon as you can, for expectation grows with delay.

Having introduced Lord and Lady Tintern to our readers, and set forth their intentions, we must let them a little into their characters and situation.

Lord Tintern had been a regularly bred diplomatist, gone through all the departments of attaché, chargé d'affairs, &c.: his first mission was not a lucky one, as he was amongst those who swelled Lord Malmsbury's unsuccessful embassy to Buonaparte, as first consul of France, one of those whom the witty Jeykel called “The youths by Malmsbury led;” but his after course improved, he was one of the secretaries of legation at Tilsit, and present at the signing of the treaty of the Holy Alliance, though innocent of its tyrannic consequences.

He was particularly good-looking, and a most agreeable man in society; and on one of his diplomatic missions had the misfortune to strike the fancy of an

ugly deformed German princess, who was, withal, so great an heiress, it was not supposed possible her hand could be rejected ; but so it was, Mr. Silvester, as he then was, had left his heart in the possession of a Yorkshire young lady, the fourth daughter of a man with a large entailed estate. But to avoid Scylla, he nearly split on Charibdis, by an imprudent marriage. But a sincere attachment carried them through much more than establishment-hunting young ladies have any idea of being within the scope of possibility. His young bride cheerfully surmounted all the difficulties attending his first diplomatic missions—had children born at various courts ; but, happy in each other, years glided quickly on, till a godfather of Mr. Silvester's, a capricious old man, died, and left him a considerable fortune, on condition that he purchased Tintern abbey, for which he had some unaccountable predilection.

The signing of a treaty entitled him to a peerage, and he took his title from the old, though not very profitable, estate, which he had, in consequence of this bequest, purchased ; but as he was, at the time we write, secretary of state for the ***** department,

he found it necessary to have a residence nearer to his office than Tintern abbey, and having found a house at Putney, or Richmond, too near London, too much within the reach of idlers, and partaking perhaps a little of the taste of his godfather, for celebrated places, he hired for three years, whilst the owner was abroad, Stoke park.

Lady Tintern was amiable, and worthy of being the wife of Lord Tintern, but a little too much bit by foreign customs and manners. She had for her children a German governess, a French *bonne*, and a young Spaniard for companion, so that her offspring were likely to acquire as strange a mixture of ideas as of languages ; and she was herself always in a state of fidgetty anxiety lest any one of these numerous languages should be neglected or forgotten. She had the same taste for foreign customs as for foreign languages, and often chose the worst thing, because it was *not English*. Music had been her passion, and in Italy, where she resided a very short time, she had fully indulged the taste ; but she fancied it could be enjoyed in perfection no where else—and, next to that, theatrical representation delighted her. She had, at one of

the lesser Italian courts, by the help of amateur and professional performers, got up some detached parts of operas very successfully ; but the exhibition at the English ambassador's palace, at Florence, had so much eclipsed every thing *private* on the continent, that Lady Tintern had given hers up. But in England, they were far behind, for though plays had been performed, no opera was attempted, neither could it be—no amateurs could compose or execute one, and the foreign *artistes* came to England so entirely to make money, they would not open their mouths without it.

The English young ladies were shy, and would not sing so publicly, though they might be prevailed on to speak. A French play, acted at a private theatre, would be a *new* thing, and might easily be managed ; and a popular farce would suit the John Bull taste of a large part of such an audience as might be collected in a country neighbourhood. So *Les Precieuses Ridicules* and *The Critic* being fixed on, and the characters disposed of, it only remained to arrange the mechanism and scenery.

CHAPTER II.

LORD TINTERN lost no time in writing to Mr. Legh, who, amongst the numerous letters on his desk, seeing one franked by Lord Tintern, hastened to open it, but, in the first few lines, seeing it was not on business, he made the agreeable yield to the profitable, and reserved it for after dinner consideration ; but he did not resume the perusal of it till his daughter had left the room, he had read enough in the first instance to guess the rest, and he wished to have time to consider the proposal, and save her from disappointment. It invited her for a week to partake of the Easter gaieties at Stoke Park. Lord Tintern was an able diplomatist ; he gave the

alluring part of the invitation first, and then added—
“ We think of some little histrionic exhibition, perhaps
Miss Legh, with whose beauty and accomplishments
we are well acquainted, will assist us.”

Mr. Legh was a shrewd man, and he belonged to a profession that called this quality, as well as caution, into daily, nay, hourly, exercise ; he therefore kept this letter, and its contents, to himself, till he had consulted a friend in whom he had great confidence.

This friend was a Mrs. Graham, the widow of a neighbouring clergyman, a well-educated woman of good family, who had preferred happiness to wealth, and united herself to a most amiable man, though not largely benefited. They lived in retirement on his living, and, whilst every day added to their mutual happiness, it contributed to the improvement and embellishment of *her* mind, by sharing the thoughts, and, in many instances, the studies also, of a man whose learning and taste were not often excelled. They had two daughters, but the eldest fell a victim to the family disease—consumption, and though the father bore the loss with the true spirit of Christian resignation, whether the latent seeds of the disease in his constitution were

ignited by his attendance on his daughter, or whether they were matured by the grief which he subdued for the sake of his family, is a question not easily determined—in less than two years he followed his beloved Caroline. But though he left his wife and youngest daughter bereaved of their greatest blessing, and with a materially diminished income, he left them a rich and invaluable legacy in his example ; and, however deeply they might lament their widowed and orphan state, they must ever wish to die as he did, “the death of the righteous,” and pray, that after the troubles of this life, their end might be like his—happy ! nay, joyful ! in the hope of being received as a faithful servant into the bosom of his Saviour and his God.

Mrs. Graham’s circumstances, as well as the weakened spirits of her daughter, after the loss of her sister, made her not averse to an occasional addition both to her family and income ; but she was very choice as to whom she received into the bosom of her domestic retreat.

Mr. Legh’s wife, who had died when his daughter was a mere child, was a great friend of Mrs. Graham’s, and, therefore, from regard to the memory of one so

dear to him, he always *consulted her* friend—he might not *always* follow the advice she gave; he considered her as placed in a very retired situation, and with different views, as respected her own daughter, from those he might entertain for his; but if he did not adopt her advice, he invariably acknowledged its good sense—but all rules have their exceptions;—his daughter promised to have a captivating person—she was not deficient in talents—and he could give her a fortune that many an heir to a great estate would be glad of. He knew something of the wants of his aristocratic neighbours; and, besides, Legh was a good name in a northern county—none need hesitate at being connected with it.

He therefore placed his daughter, rather *against* Mrs. Graham's advice, at a celebrated finishing school in London, where the young ladies, besides being perfected in music, dancing, singing, &c., by the first masters; were taught how to receive company, get in, and out of a carriage; in short, were made the prettiest little pieces of affectation, conceit, and artifice, imaginable; and are sent home from these exquisite establishments, to despise all they find there, as deficient in the *refinement* they have been taught to

think only worth living for, and to hold *firm principles* and a *cultivated mind* as *gothic*, only fit acquirements for the wives of country parsons.

Mr. Legh, in one of her holydays, saw something of this coming on his daughter, and, to stop the evil, took her from school; but she was too young and inexperienced to manage his house, or sit at the head of his table; he therefore prevailed on Mrs. Graham to receive her into her family for two years; she did so, and, finding an excellent disposition to work on, did much to counteract the frivolous and absurd notions she had acquired at Madame Delavaux. But weeds may be apparently destroyed, and yet leave so much of their roots still in the soil, that when the sunshine of admiration, or the dews of flattery fall on them, they spring up again in vigour.

At the time we are writing, Miss Legh had returned home, and been about six months the acknowledged mistress of her father's house, though its domestic arrangements were conducted by a steady old house-keeper, and his company, which was not much, invited by himself. He dreaded, above every thing, young companions for his daughter, of her own age and class

of life ; indeed, his ambition had led him sometimes to hope that she would soar above those who were now of her own grade, and though he reasoned against these feelings, yet he could not but be highly gratified at the invitation he had received, and it was so kind and friendly, so unexpected ; and though his slumbers might have been a little disturbed by the anticipations of parental ambition, and his dreams visited by titles and equipages, he resolved the next morning to ride over to Fullerton, and consult Mrs. Graham, before he informed Emma of the honour intended her.

He mounted his horse early, and arrived at Mrs. Graham's soon after his breakfast ; he found her alone, but his whole appearance was of a man hurried in body and mind, beyond "his wont :" in general, his deportment was that of a quiet methodical man of business ; and as the affairs persons of his profession transact are not their own, they occasion no overwhelming anxiety for their subsequent event. It has been said, and believed, of Mr. Pitt, that, arduous as was the task of prime minister in such turbulent times, he never lost a night's rest by his official anxieties.

Mrs. Graham received her friend with her usual

cordiality, and, after the first greetings and enquiries were over, he said :—

“ My good friend, you know how arduous and anxious my situation, as the father of a girl of Emma’s age, is ; would I had long ago sought a person to assist me, but, alas !” with a deep drawn aspiration, intended for a sigh, “ where could I find one to replace your inestimable friend ? and now I experience in its full force my bereavement.” Mrs. Graham felt,

“ How fleet is a glance of the mind,
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift winged arrows of light.”

and she trembled lest Mr. Legh was come with a proposal to her daughter, not that she could be, in her circumstances, averse to *settling* her, as it is called ; but well as she thought of Mr. Legh, he was not the husband she should choose, or wish, for her daughter, he was wholly unsuitable to her in mind ; but whilst this was passing in her thoughts, he was fumbling in his pocket for a letter, and presenting it to her, said :—

“ Give me your opinion on this.”

The seal being completely broken relieved Mrs.

Graham's mind, but it led to another conjecture, that it was a proposal made to *his* daughter. She read Lord Tintern's letter, folded it up, returned her spectacles into their case without speaking. Neither Mr. Legh's patience nor his time could long endure this, and he said :—

“ Well, my good madam, what do you think of this invitation? and what do you advise me to do? for that is the business on which I have ridden over.”

“ I do not know,” replied Mrs. Graham, “ that I am a good judge, I live so out of the world, and am so ignorant of its ways, that what are common, every day, occurrences to others, appear fearful events to me. I can hardly pretend to advise.”

“ Oh, my excellent friend! do not become so scrupulous all of a sudden, you well know there is no one of whose judgment I have so high an opinion; and after the protection you have given my dear child, and the friendship you have always professed to a dear departed! and for her sake to me, do not desert us in our need. I can only feel Lord Tintern's kindness, and of course I cannot be averse to my girl's making one of good, indeed of fine, company.”

“Your daughter, I think, forgive me,” replied Mrs. Graham, “is not destined by birth to make one of what you call *fine* company; is it, do you think, advantageous to give her a taste for what may seldom, if ever, come in her way again? May it not make her dissatisfied with all the good, and that good is great, which is now within her power; for however great friends may sometimes condescend in their notice, I fear they are not always to be depended on for its regular flow, it is too often conferred as a matter of interest or convenience to themselves.”

“Oh! as to that,” replied Mr. Legh, “though I am profoundly sensible of the honor Lord Tintern has done me, we have mutual obligations. I can better do without him, than he without me. After all, my good friend, you forget that my daughter has some pretensions—I do not mean personal ones, for now a-days there are hundreds and thousands of pretty girls. But she has substantial qualifications, for, to own a truth to you, if I die to-morrow she will have more than Thirty Thousand pounds, and if my life is prolonged a few years, it may be Fifty Thousand; and I can tell you, as an unquestionable fact, that there are very few lords, or

commoners, in this, or the neighbouring counties, who would not jump at such a match, even for an eldest son."

"Then I understand," said Mrs. Graham, "you think that this introduction may be advantageous in a matrimonial point of view, to your daughter; and therefore, I ought not to throw in a hint of objection: but do favour me with another perusal of that letter, I may have misunderstood its meaning."

She again read the letter, and, returning it, said,

"No! I was not mistaken! I had heard, though I did not pay much attention to the report, as having no interest in it, that there are going to be private theatricals at Stoke Park; and I see Lord Tintern confirms the report, and hints that your daughter may be called on to assist at them."

"Oh!" replied, Mr. Legh, "they are only sort of holyday things; I suppose got up by the children, and perhaps they may expect her to play some quadrilles, or some such thing—indeed, in a childish thing, amongst themselves, if she did take a part, it is what she has done at school, and you know even boarders in a convent act those sort of pieces."

“ Well,” said Mrs. Graham, “ it may be only *that* which is intended, and as I have said before, *I* know but little of the world as it goes now—it is altered since my time—but, judging for myself, I certainly should not like a daughter of mine, and one as lovely, young, and inexperienced, as Emma, to act a part in a play; the characters of which are indiscriminately filled by Lord Tintern’s acquaintance.”

“ A thousand thanks for the hint, then if you don’t really advise *against* accepting the invitation altogether, I will provide against the contingency you have stated; and order Emma not to take part in any play, without writing to me;” a caution he afterwards forgot, in the gratification he experienced from the invitation. After a few enquiries after Miss Graham, who had walked out, he took his leave, saying, “ I am glad *you* do not *dis*-approve the determination I have come to, since I have heard your arguments; and I shall let Emma accept this invitation.”

“ It is not by my *advice*, I must beg to say,” replied Mrs. Graham.

“ Oh, but I have settled all your objections,” replied Mr. Legh, “ so you cannot blame me.”

“ My worthy friend,” said Mrs. Graham, putting her hand on his arm, to prevent his running away before she had finished her sentence ; “ I must beg explicitly to say, I never have, nor could, *advise* you to let your daughter make this visit ; but if you do not think my objections of sufficient weight, I have done the part of a friend—and indeed one you called on me to do—you act for yourself—I may be mistaken, and for your sake, and dear Emma’s, I hope I am : I wish her all the pleasure she can have, and with as little risk as possible.”

How easily do people persuade themselves to follow their *own* inclinations, giving the credit to another, while the success is *doubtful* ; and attributing the whole to their *own* sagacity, if it *succeeds*. A celebrated wit and author of the last century, being asked by a lady to give her advice on some certain points, said, “ Madam, I seldom *give* advice, for I never *take* it.” Did he not speak the sentiments of nine tenths of mankind ? It may, with truth, be affirmed that few people ask advice till they have made up their *own* minds on a subject, they ask for confirmation, not contradiction.

Mr. Legh easily persuaded himself he had ably

combatted all objections against the visit to Stoke Park, that had been brought forward by Mrs. Graham, and therefore rode home at a brisk pace, feeling, or fancying, he had brought *her* over to his opinion ; and after the first mile, having settled this question, he let his thoughts turn to other subjects ; planned answers to his letters of business, and was at his own door before he was aware of it.

He spent, as usual, the rest of his morning in his office with his clerks. But when he joined his daughter at dinner, he seemed so cheerful, rubbed his hands, and occasionally chuckled with glee, that she could not help saying,

“ You must have had something particularly pleasant this morning, dear papa, I am delighted to see you so happy ! ”

“ Thank you, Emma, I have had a very pleasant ride to Fullerton, and found our good friend, Mrs. Graham, and her daughter, quite well.”

“ I am doubly glad,” replied Emma, “ if what pleases you is also a source of pleasure or satisfaction to them.”

But at this moment a thought darted across her

mind, and she checked the idea, for well as she loved Mrs. Graham, still Emma wished for no step-mother, particularly when she was just beginning to feel a little of the independence of being at the head of an establishment; she sat therefore silent, and subdued her impatience; feeling a little afraid to hear the tidings she a few minutes before was so impatient to learn; and when the servant carried out the last tray, her heart beat so violently that she changed countenance; her father observed it, and said,

“What is the matter, Emma, I hope you are not ill, for I have really, as I trust, a most agreeable piece of news for you: Lord Tintern has invited you to Stoke Park, to partake of the intended Easter diversions there, of which you have heard so much.”

Emma grew breathless; but her father sipped his first glass of wine, before he concluded his sentence, by saying,

“I have been to consult Mrs. Graham, and as she does not disapprove entirely of the thing, I shall, I think, consent.”

Emma’s revulsion of joy could only be expressed by her jumping up from table—throwing her arms

round her father's neck—kissing his cheek—saying,
“ Dear ! dear ! good papa !”

“ I expect,” replied he “ a dear, good, obedient daughter : I have some hints and advice to give before you go, but perhaps I shall put them on paper, in the form of memoranda, that you may have them to refer to.”

Emma promised implicit obedience to any commands he should give her, had a thousand questions to ask, which her father could not answer, but when she left the room, he put a twenty pound note into her hand, for any equipment she might want.

Money makes fingers move, as well as horses, and the most expert milliner and dress-maker in Reading promised Miss Legh all she wished in the shortest time,—the newest fashions, and the best materials. How the poor girl slept on these things, or what her dreams were, we leave to young ladies in similar circumstances—preparing for their *début*, to determine.

CHAPTER III.

IT is really quite wonderful how much preparation and how much trouble must be taken to get up a little play. But then this depends on *how* it is to be done. As a family affair, and an impromptu, it is easily managed. Private theatricals have been admirably managed, and excellently performed. No one likes to have a failure; therefore this was intended by its projectress to be super-excellent. Stanfield, and an amateur artist, directed and executed the scenery, which had been sometime preparing and was nearly completed: two days more were to pass over, and then the actors were to assemble, have one undress rehearsal, one dress performance, before the

tenants and the servants of the establishment ; and then the neighbouring gentry were to have the exhibition in its most perfect and finished state.

As Lady Tintern was inspecting a material point of effect to be produced by a back scene, Mrs. De Cameron was announced, and if Lady Tintern had not been a thorough woman of the world, with her feelings under perfect command, she must have shewn that she disliked this unexpected arrival. But Mrs. De Cameron had much too good an opinion of herself, and her talents, and her usefulness, on every occasion, to doubt that she must be acceptable wherever she chose to bestow herself. There are people, who, with some degree of talent, unite so much *amour propre* as almost to render their talents oppressive.

Mrs. De Cameron, it is true, was often useful in a large party and a country house—she liked only to talk to men—those who were not young ; and those who had pretensions liked to converse with *her*—she met them on their own ground—she had travelled a good deal—indeed had been in places and scenes where few women venture to go—she knew the value of this—she was *the* Mrs. De Cameron who had been farther into

the interior of India than any English woman—had been shipwrecked on an unhabited island—but she was alive to tell the tale. She had besides a smattering of science, sufficient to talk of Botany, Chemistry, and Geology—knew a few terms in each—and always asked questions for *information*, which flattered those who knew more, and was most scrupulously careful never to commit herself. She generally found it answer best to devote her attention to some distinguished *savant* or *would be savant*—who wanted a listener, and on the authority of such people, being pronounced a *very clever woman*, she lived on that reputation. She avoided women's society as much as possible, affected to despise her own sex, and when she did mix in general society, usually talked to the least informed—took a decided and dictatorial tone with—Perhaps you do not know this! or have never seen that! Well then, *I have*, and can tell you. Of course the women of her own standing *hated her*—the younger ones laughed at her—the young men either joined in the ridicule, or fled from her as they would have done from a scorpion.

She had thrust herself into these theatricals against Lady Tintern's wishes, by offering to take *any* part,

and in return that of *Marotte*, a *fille de chambre* had been allotted to her—this she very much disliked, wanted to be one of *les precieuses ridicules*, though rather too old, and much too large for so young a character. But it was principally to get her character changed, that she had made her premature appearance at Stoke Park.

When she entered, she exclaimed, “ My dear Lady Tintern, are you not astonished to see me here ? I fear you will hate me for coming upon you so soon, but I have been in Staffordshire, and Lady Willingham offered me a place in her carriage, and to come round, and drop me here, if I could set out three days sooner than I proposed. Your kind heart will forgive me, I know, for you are well aware how important to my small purse it is to be saved an expensive journey, and how much more delightful to me to travel with all Lady Willingham’s luxuries, than per mail ; it was really irresistible ! so I throw myself on your mercy—now do as you please with me—make me scene-painter, or any thing you please, you know what I can do.”

Lady Tintern made up her countenance to a welcome as well as she could, but her visitor had carried one point in getting there, and she trusted firmly to her

own address, in improving the opportunity she had obtained.

At dinner, Lord Tintern who was more tolerant of Mrs. De Cameron than his lady, because more amused by her, inadvertently said, "they were disappointed of Lady Olivia Dalrymple."

"I grieve for you with all my heart," exclaimed Mrs. De Cameron, though she inwardly rejoiced, "who have you to supply her place? I am, I hope, arrived *a la bonne heure* to do it. You know I do not care what I act; in twenty-four hours I could learn the whole play by heart, indeed I almost know it now; for, from my childhood, I have doated on Moliere. Which part was Lady Olivia to have taken?"

"We have supplied her place," said Lady Tintern, rather coldly.

"Oh! do tell me by whom?"

No immediate answer was returned, and after an awkward pause, in which the question was repeated, Lord Tintern said,

"By a very pretty girl, a daughter of my agent, who I dare say will do her part very creditably."

"Oh! my dear lord, that is not a part, pardon me,

for a simple girl, there is so much affectation, so much *minanderie* required, it really ought to be acted by one who knows the world, and has had some experience : do let me change characters with this young lady ; any body can act a *fille de chambre*—your friend will look charmingly *a la paysanne*."

But this arrangement was not in Lady Tintern's contemplation ; she was herself to act Madelon, and though hardly young enough for the character, her small light figure and good complexion, made her, when dressed young—look so. Nothing could make Mrs. De Cameron *light and airy*, she would do for Marotte, and for nothing else, and if she now objected to that, Lady Tintern was determined to make Mademoiselle Clementine, her children's *bonne*, do it, and she did not scruple in very decided terms, to make her intentions known to her guest.

There was Mrs. Dangle, in *the Critic*, or Tilburina mad in white satin, either were at her service ; but Lady Tintern was not a person to be baffled, and she heartily wished Mrs. De Cameron had travelled, per mail, or in any manner, so long as she had kept away till she was wanted. But she knew her party would soon be re-

inforced, for the next day were to come Count Lally Dunois, and Mr. Fitz Gibbon ; the former was to perform the part of le Marquis de Maseaille, in the play, and of Dangle in the farce ; and the latter, le Visconte de Jodelet in the play, and Puff in *The Critic* : both accomplished, and practised actors, but the Count was too large to personate a very young character.

Mrs. De Cameron knew the influence both of these had on this occasion, and when they arrived, made her court first to Dunois, and so flattered him on the score of a tragedy he had been vain enough to pretend to write in English, that at last he inflicted the penalty on the party of hearing an act of it read. He even proposed to translate *the Critic* into French for the present occasion, but as Lady Tintern meant to “buy golden opinions from all sorts of persons,” one part of the entertainment was to be national.

The following morning after consultations, alterations, and altercations between Stanfield and Mr. Fitz Gibbon, who had been previously consulted, and had planned some of the scenery, in all of which Mrs. De Cameron took a most active part, it was proposed to make a little trial, just to hear how their voices sounded, and

the two gentlemen were to read the parts that were not filled up.

This was exactly what Mrs. De Cameron wanted, and for once she out-maneuvred Lady Tintern ; she read the part of Cathos, and acted that of Marotte, which had been allotted to her. It must be acknowledged, that if the audience could have shut their eyes to her figure, she played her part with such tact and piquancy, that Lady Tintern began to tremble for her little protégée.

Early on the following day, Mr. Legh presented his daughter to her host and hostess. Men are always “taken aback” by beauty, especially that which owes much of its charm to extreme youth ; this was the case with Emma Legh, and she looked even younger than she was, and without being a regular beauty she might have sat to any painter for Hebe. Mr. Fitz Gibbon was a connoisseur in beauty, and often, by his fiat, decided the estimation in which a new candidate at Almack’s was to be held.

Dunois was an inferior, or we should say, a less fastidious, judge, but a more devoted worshipper ; his admiring gaze, equally with Mr. Fitz Gibbon’s scru-

tinizing one, called up the purest and most lovely blushes on the cheeks of a young girl, so little accustomed to excite such attention.

Soon after Mr. Legh's departure, his daughter was shewn the theatre, and requested, by Lady Tintern, to take a part in their projected amusement, she wished she had known this before her father went away, that she might have asked his permission, but in committing her to the care of Lady Tintern, he had told her, that "he trusted she would direct his daughter," and to the latter he had said "what Lady Tintern wishes, *you* will do." Commands could not be more positive, and her obedience was therefore prompt: she promised to be perfect in her part by the next day.

A dinner in a large establishment was very different to what she was used to; and, amongst strangers, she felt more awkward than she expected. The first mouthful of soup seemed almost to choak her: but she soon saw she was chiefly an object of attention only to a Frenchman, and she recovered much self-possession, whilst Mr. Fitz Gibbon and Mrs. De Cameron disputed on the affairs of Greece, and whether Lord Byron's interference did good or harm. After tea Lady Tintern

made her bring her work to her table, and, with the assistance of Count Dunois, she read her part and received his instructions as to acting it.

Mrs. De Cameron and Mr. Fitz Gibbon were at chess, and amused themselves with this scene ; the former ridiculed the idea of such a raw girl being able to play the part assigned her, and prognosticated a failure, and the consequent discomfort of Lady Tintern which she said “ would serve her right for rejecting *her* offer.” Much as Fitz Gibbon admired the bloom and natural charms of Emma, he curled his lip a little contemptuously at a want of tact, in *La belle provinciale*, as he called her, and prophesied that Dunois’ encomiums would rather overpower, than encourage her.

He was mistaken : the following day after breakfast a rehearsal was proposed. Emma was perfect in her part ; she learnt it with a school girl’s facility, having risen early for the purpose. Fitz Gibbon then saw there was capability about her, and encouraged her ; but the Count’s flattery and applause so distressed her, added to the exertion, that at the conclusion she burst into tears, and Lady Tintern reproached herself, and was provoked with the others, for expecting too much

from one so young, and unpractised ; but those used to girls of the world can hardly judge of those bred in retirement. She took Emma to her dressing-room, and, whilst she was composing her spirits, Mrs. De Cameron exclaimed to the Count and Fitz-Gibbon,

“That little rustic will spoil all ! how could Lady Tintern be so absurd as to think a raw school-girl could act that difficult part ? But I suppose there is some good and *substantial* reason, for pleasing her father, and *we* are to be sacrificed to it !”

“There is a great deal about that girl, too,” said Fitz-Gibbon, “she might be made very produceable, if *I* had her under my tuition, for six months, I would bring her out at Almack’s, to your astonishment.”

“Oh !” replied Mrs. De Cameron, “we all know your talent in polishing up young ladies ! but you will not have time here for that.”

“There is something of Miss O’Neil in her tone of voice,” rejoined he, “and she modulates it well ; but she is a novice, and so timid, it is your exaggerated admiration, Dunois, that does the mischief, leave her to herself.”

“Or to you,” said Mrs. De Cameron, who comforted herself with, “they must have me at last.”

Dunois defended himself from the charge of exaggeration; he said, “she really was a charming creature, and her *naïveté* quite captivating.”

“Well,” replied Fitz-Gibbon, “admire her as much as you please, but if you wish us to make any thing of her, be a little more moderate in your expression of that admiration; English girls are not used to see men on their knees to them, the posture frightens them.”

“No wonder,” said Mrs. De Cameron, “for in these lounging days, the utmost homage a girl now receives is from a man lying at his whole length on a sofa; and if he is very much in love with her, lolling over its back, to talk to her; whilst she dislocates her neck by trying to look round to hear what he is saying to her.”

The count, not being interested in this latter speech, walked off.

“We must keep him within bounds this evening,” said Mr. Fitz Gibbon, “and I will undertake to give our novice a little oblique and unobtrusive instruction,

and you'll see, we will do something with her to-morrow ; when she has got a little used to us, she won't think us such dragons, poor little soul : her pronunciation is not perfect, but it is very tolerable, Dunois could help us to correct a few of her inaccuracies, for her accent is pleasing, if he will not go into his extacies."

" It will never, never do, take my honest word for it," said Mrs. De Cameron : and as Lady Tintern did not return, she determined to take a walk, and the volume of *Moliere* with her, that she might perfect herself in the part she fancied *must* of necessity fall to her share.

When the party met at dinner, she most tenderly enquired after Miss Legh's health, pitied her weak nerves, and would have carried the point on which she had set her heart, and persuaded her to relinquish the character of Cathos to her, had not Lady Tintern interfered ; she would not suffer Emma to be taken from under *her especial* protection, though she too had her doubts of her little friend standing the ordeal, and her fears also of being obliged to comply with what she disliked ; but yet she saw there was

much *ability* about Emma, and determined to have all the credit of whatever success she obtained ; she only wished for a little more time to do it in ; there was more in *her* than in Lady Olivia, but the latter was a girl used to the world, the other knew but a small part of it only, and that by description ; and, added to the difficulties that a new and strange situation naturally presents, she added an awful idea of the *rank* of the persons with whom she was now associated. The real truth, had she known it, was, that very high bred and fine people are of all others the easiest to live with, and those amongst whom there is the least of the forms and trammels of society. The half bred and the under bred are ceremonious and punctilious, afraid of transgressing what *they* consider the rules of society ; those of the higher order feel those things as much a part of themselves as the nails on their fingers. It cannot be denied that persons of rank can be, and often are, proud and insolent, but it is only to those who encroach on their self-love, or who attempt too closely to assimilate to a rank to which they have no pretensions ; in humbler phrase,

who tread on their heels, thwart their interests, or their pleasures.

How little did honest Jacob Legh, when he ate his mutton alone, and, in his first glass of port after it, drink the health of Emma's noble host and hostess, imagine that his little darling girl was a shuttlecock, tossed backward and forward, and contended for by four different parties, each of whom had an *interested* motive for what they were doing.

Lady Tintern's was by far the purest feeling, there was something in Emma that won on her maternal feelings, and she could n't help thinking if one of her own daughters, who were at present plain and dingy, should turn out like her, how much she could make of her.

Mrs. De Cameron's contention for Emma was genuine selfishness; she hoped by her superior address, and knowledge of the world, to throw all Emma's personal endowments into shade, and gain her own point by working upon her diffident, and increasing her natural, and really beautiful, timidity. Such is envy and worldly mindedness!

The Count was determined to make her *au fait* to her part, and give her the necessary degree of self-

possession by immoderate flattery and admiration ; but though his extravagant encomiums might pass current with a vain and frivolous French woman, they were so much beyond what a well regulated mind, and one unused to such hyperbole, could appropriate, that Emma's good sense led her to fancy, either that he was laughing at her, or thought her a fool, and she only answered them by the deepest blushes.

Mr. Fitz-Gibbon knew women, at least English women, better ; he saw all the drift of Mrs. De Cameron's caresses, and determined, from his aversion to her, to counteract her, and from his ~~very~~ good opinion of Miss Legh's talents, and admiration of her beauty, to do all he could to make her act her part with credit.

He could persuade her that she understood it, her confidence would rise.

When the ladies returned from the dining room to drawing room, Mrs. De Cameron said :—

“ My dear Miss Legh, I must prescribe a little repose for you ; allow me, indeed, you must, to put up your feet on this sofa, and keep quiet ; without such precaution, believe me, you will never go through even our rehearsal to-morrow ! ”

Emnia was accustomed to no such indulgence, and to no such fine ladyism ; she laughed at the idea, and said :—

“ A little dance with Lady Tintern’s children, who were in the room, would do her much more good ; that really the Count and Mr. Fitz-Gibbon had both been so good natured and encouraging, she had lost a great many of her fears.”

“ Oh, my dear, you say so now ; people, even those as temperate as you are, always feel stronger after dinner, but you do not know how you will feel when you see a large audience listening to you.”

“ Mr. Fitz Gibbon,” replied Miss Legh very modestly “ has instructed me not to look at all at the audience ; only to fancy them sofas and chairs ; and to see, if I can, those only who are on the stage : I shall try to remember his caution.”

“ Mr. Fitz Gibbon is a very good instructor,” said Mrs. De Cameron, “ but one cannot fight against nature, and I am sure your’s is a very timid one.”

“ It has not been used to be reckoned so, I assure you, Ma’am ; at school I was always allowed to have a great deal of nerve, and none of my masters feared my

doing my best, at our exhibitions ; but I don't mean to praise myself."

Mrs. De Cameron shook her head ! " School exhibitions, and such as is now before you, are very different ; but remember if you fail before the tenants and servants, I shall be ready to take your part at the grand performance, and leave you mine."

Lady Tintern, who had gone out of the room with her children, returned to hear this offer, and, provoked at Mrs. De Cameron's perseverance, said,

" I have no fears whatever about Miss Legh's abilities, or her courage, and if she, or any one else should fail, I am provided with substitutes, so my dear Mrs. De Cameron don't be the least uneasy ; I can even get *your* part filled if you don't like it, and leave you only the epilogue—the prologue which Mr. Fitz Gibbons has written, he must speak himself,—we are rather divided about the epilogue, but shall perhaps decide this evening."

Mrs. De Cameron had thrown a few hasty lines together as epilogue, and hoped her poor production, would be taken into consideration with others, she had just shewn the outline to Dr. Duten's, and it had his

approbation. She thought it ought to be spoken in the character of the comic muse who, encouraging the Stoke Park theatricals, was to be astounded by the ghost of Sir Christopher Hatton demanding what they all meant in profaning, by such trash, the boards where Shakspeare himself, had played his own inimitable productions?"

Provoked as Lady Tintern had been by Mrs. De Cameron's attempts on Miss Legh, she could not but acknowledge this was rather a happy thought; and turned in her mind how she could make a compromise between the epilogue and the part of Cathos—and she felt at a loss as to who could speak this epilogue, certainly Mrs. De Cameron was not a figure for a muse!

CHAPTER IV.

AN accession to the *corps dramatique*, as well as the party, was expected at dinner—but came not! Young men are never to be depended on—punctuality is not in their catalogue of virtues. But, as he handed round the tea, the groom of the chambers said, “Lord John Leslie and Mr. Dupré are arrived my Lord—they are dressing, and would be down immediately.”

They accounted for their non-arrival in time for dinner—they had been upset, killed a post horse, and almost a post boy, and gave a most ridiculous description of their disaster—just one of the sort of things young men are always meeting with!

Mr. Dupré almost convulsed the party with laughter at his description of the rage of “Mine Hostess of the Crown,” at their refusing to pay the exorbitant price she put on her horse: he shewed his powers as a comic actor to great advantage—it made a good story, though the horse came to life, and the man recovered, having been more frightened than hurt, and served as an excellent joke, till the parties met with another adventure of the same kind.

Lady Tintern inquired where Mr. Edward Fermor was; he had taken the part of Georgibus, and was a material person.

“He could not come with us, he was on guard, said Mr. Duprée, but he will ride down to-morrow, and bid us assure you and Lord Tintern he would be here to breakfast.”

Lord John Leslie was just returned from a tour that had not only taken in part of Greece, and the Islands of the Archipelago, but had extended some way into Egypt. He was, therefore, a worthy member of the Travellers’ club, whilst Mr. Duprée, who had only come lately from Paris was quite in his noviciate. The latter was a young man of considerable talents, and, amongst them, rather an advantageous one for

mimicry ; but good sense and good feeling kept this within bounds. He was better fitted to play Sir Fretful Plagiary in *The Critic* than Du Croisy in the play ; but he took the one with the other.

Lord John Leslie was to act La Grange, and Don Whiskerandos. Talking over their respective characters, a discussion arose as to how La Force, the principal comic actor at Paris, would do the pretended Marquis de Mascarille. This was carried almost to a dispute between Count Dunois and Mrs. De Cameron, which was at first *aggravated* by Mr. Dupré's droll remarks ; but it ended amicably, and Dunois was to play it his own way, subject to criticism.

Emma, with her work, listened to all the remarks made on different passages, and felt in several instances that some of them were delicately directed to her, she attended and profited, and it was also contrived to give her the most gratifying and flattering encouragement. She had had a repetition of the private rehearsal when Mrs. De Cameron was taking her sanitive walk, Fan-chon read one of the parts, whilst Lady Tintern corrected some of Emma's attitudes and actions ; and she caught the manner of speaking of the *Bonne*, much

better than Lady Tintern expected ; who began to be quite delighted at producing some surprise, as well as mortification, to Mrs. De Cameron.

Lord John Leslie was excessively struck with the sweetness of countenance, and natural easy turn of Miss Legh's manner.

In despite of every pains taken by the refiners of society to substitute art for nature, and however men may be allured and entangled by artifice and coquetry, the human heart will still pay its unpremeditated homage to true, genuine nature, when it is exhibited in its freshest and loveliest form, an unsophisticated young girl. It has the same effect on those used to the artificial manners of society, that the prospect of nature, in her beautiful garb of spring or autumn, has on one who has been long shut up in the dense atmosphere of a crowded city. And the homage is the greater, from being involuntarily brought out by the mere force of natural attraction.

Lord John would not have believed any one who had told him, *his* admiration would have been excited, even to its highest pitch, by a country girl lately come from boarding school. Oh no, ' the smell of bread

and butter' must be horrible ! he only liked the warm complexion, and dark flashing eyes of the Greek women, or the languishing ones of Spain, all else was tame and insipid. Yet he could hardly for a moment take his off from Emma, though she was no regular beauty, had neither a classic line of countenance, nor particularly correct features, but there was a sweet, as well as varied, expression in her face, and the different hues of her beautifully transparent complexion, and the constant changes it underwent.

How could *rouge* stand against the vivid bloom of youth, or the most elaborate *crepé* compare with the beautiful natural ringlets which her rich brown hair fell into ! Lord John was delighted to hear she was to take a part in their theatrical performance, and entreated it might be Madelon, to whom he was to be devoted, but the arrangement had ordered it otherwise.

After tea the theatre had been ordered to be partially lighted, and without the appropriated dresses, or the whole *corps*, and with Lord Tintern as prompter, to fill up all deficient parts ; a little rehearsal was proposed, when the following disposition took place.

Lady Tintern played her part of Madelon, and

Miss Legh her's of Cathos ; Mrs. De Cameron, the objectionable one of Marotte ; the Count, that of Du Croisy and his double, the Marquis de Mascarille ; Lord John, La Grange, and his Valet le Vicomte du Jodelet ; Lord Tintern read the parts of Georgibus and Almanzar : every one must have read *Les Precieuses Ridicules* or they have read nothing.

The gentlemen played their parts like practised actors, whether as La Force would have done or not, we leave others to determine. The little confusion that took place, from the same persons playing master and valet, was managed with great address, though most laughable in its performance.

Lady Tintern's Madelon was perfection. We cannot, with equal truth say the same of Emma's performance, but she soon took her tone from Lady Tintern, and did much better, than (all things considered) could have been expected.

The approbation she received from Mr. Fitz Gibbon, and the applause and adoration bestowed on her by the Count, might have turned a stronger head than her's ; but her success did not stop there, Lord John Leslie was one of the young men, perhaps peculiar to

the present day, who, having imbibed a good deal of the license of foreign manners, fancy themselves not only at liberty to fall in love with any girl they meet, but to do every thing in their power to gain her affections, and yet have no farther object in view than the amusement of the moment, regardless—wholly and unfeelingly, regardless of the misery they may eventually be causing.

How many, many, young women have the first, the strongest, the best feelings of their hearts sacrificed to the *Vanity* of men! Who can restore the bloom to a plum, when a cruel or careless hand has brushed it off!!!

When the performance was over, and the actresses were surrounded by the party, the whole praise was devoted to Miss Legh; it would have been impertinent to have said more to Lady Tintern, than “I think we did very well considering.” Mrs. De Cameron no one heeded—but she complained how little she had to do.

Mr. Fitz Gibbons’s praise of Emma’s performance was mixed—but very gently mixed—with criticism, but so judicious, and so very well seasoned with encouragement, she could not help feeling grateful for the appro-

bation, and anxious to be more deserving of it. He seemed so like a friend—and he was not a young man. She was too inexperienced to know that a man of the world never considers himself *old*, or *too old* to be a lover—he knows how to make himself *up*—he may be called “an old donkey,” by the boys in the guards, but he has his experience, and his knowledge of the world—and as “Each thinks his little set, mankind” this gives him great advantages.

He had, though, no intention of becoming a lover of Emma’s—indeed he could afford to love nothing but a large fortune—and such an one had not come entirely within his reach—perhaps he did not wish to sit down a Benedict; even with a place, a park, and a wife—he had a moderate independent fortune, enough for a good lodging in town, a couple of hacks for riding, a curricle, or a cabriolet, as might be the reigning fashion—he belonged to the best clubs, and, for the rest, he “lived about,” was asked to shooting parties—ran down to Newmarket when any particuiar match was to be won—he had long given up Melton—“he was” he said, with a shrug, “too poor,” and those to whom he said it were wont to add, “and too old also,”—but he was al-

ways acceptable in a country house, either with, or without a large party—he was full of anecdote, trifling or literary ; played a little on the violin—was some judge of pictures, and a good one of prints. He well knew how to make the most of himself, and increase the favour of his visit wherever he chose to bestow it, by always having various engagements to choose out of—besides being a good shot, he played well at billiards, chess, and whist, and was, in summer, a most determined and scientific fisherman—and adding to all these conventional qualifications, had popular and agreeable manners, and he every where made himself welcome—he also possessed a good dash of a sort of sarcastic wit, which made him a little feared, sufficiently so not to be considered always a *convenient* person, that might be treated *haut en bas*.

It was that species which a century ago carried a man into the first society, but wit has died with the Horace Walpole race, perhaps his might ; as it was employed, be better termed a taste for the ridiculous, and an aptitude to turn what he did not like into the laughable ; it was very useful to him in keeping people in a little awe of him, and it also gave him the privilege

of saying rather bitter, and sometimes rather impudent, things with impunity ; nobody minded him because nobody liked to provoke his resentment by “ taking up ” his sallies. There was a suspicion entertained that he could caricature with his pencil as well as with his pen, but, if it was so, he had the good sense and tact to keep the talent either so concealed, or so controlled, he never gave offence by its exercise.

He talked much of this lord or that distinguished character as his particular FRIEND. It may be questioned if there was one amongst the catalogue that really deserved that name.

Society, especially the higher grades of it, is maintained by the compact of mutual convenience, its *liaisons* are slender, brittle links, but they serve their purpose—mutual convenience, and amusement, and even when the latter ceases to be afforded, the link may still continue, sometimes from habit, sometimes from fear ; those who live much together in artificial life, however well the mask they wear may fit, it has often some crevice which betrays the real countenance ; and those who live in the same *set* must of necessity be linked together by a little free-masonry.

However the attentions and the encomiums of Mr. Fitz-Gibbon might have affected Emma's mind, had they stood alone, they were greatly overpowered by Dunois, his looks, his words, his actions, were *devotion!* *adoration!* but he was a fat, heavy-looking man, certainly not under forty, and in figure he looked older.

Miss Legh could only blush and disclaim all his fine speeches, they were fulsome, cloying, even to one so young and uninitiated. She knew she was not an angel, though her glass must have always reflected something very gratifying.

But she stood in a much more dangerous position with Lord John Leslie; he was a young, and much more captivating man—a good deal of the *lady-killer* about him. He saw what both Fitz-Gibbon and Dunois were about, and, besides the gratification of gaining the heart of a lovely, young, and untutored girl, untaught by any scheming mother, or guarded by a father, or a brother, there was great pleasure in flooring, as he called it, those two old boys—what pretensions had they to monopolize the prettiest and most attractive of the party? he should like to make her in

love with himself, if it was only to give these old fellows a lesson not to attempt monopoly again.

He had, at first hearing that Lady Olivia Dalrymple had withdrawn, determined to cede also—there would be no one worth acting with. Lady Olivia was an only child, and would have a large fortune; she was therefore a good speculation for many of the young men about town, only her confounded father was a dragon-guarding most watchfully his Hesperides.

So, having put off other engagements for these theatricals, he thought he might as well go down to Stoke Park, if his *séjour* turned out a bore, he could run down to Newmarket for the Spring meeting, but finding such game there, he determined to pursue it as long as it amused him.

But *he* made his attacks on Emma in a very different way; he aimed, it is true, at the citadel, but he determined to take it by sap and mine. He, of all the men there, said nothing at first beyond what his part dictated; but he looked unutterable things, and the very marked way in which he desired to be *introduced* to Miss Legh, made Lord Tintern imagine he was particularly struck with her, and knowing him to be on the fortune-hunt-

ing list, thought a rich attorney's daughter might suit him, as such matches had done others of his rank ; at least Lord Tintern left the thing to take its chance.

He had a regard for Mr. Legh as a steady, clever man, of more integrity than was usually found in persons of his profession ; he knew he was also ambitious and rich. Lord Tintern was much interested for Emma—there was something peculiarly engaging in her ; perhaps he did not reason on the subject as we have done, but he felt there was nothing wrong or ridiculous in it, and he was, on all occasions, a diplomatist who saw early into probabilities and possibilities.

CHAPTER V.

POPE says that “little hearts will flutter at a beau.” What must the fluttering be of one so new to the world, so unsuspicuous of its treacherous ways, as Emma Legh? Those who may be disposed to doubt the ignorance and simplicity of mind in a young girl who had been at one of the fashionable *finishing schools* in London, where nothing is pretended to be done to regulate the heart, where only *shewy* accomplishments—*shewy* manners, and a good carriage, are attended to, by the lady at the head of such establishments, and where the inferior parts are filled up chiefly by foreign teachers. What can the produce of such instructions be but

artifice—the rudiments of intrigue are often produced—by the loan of books calculated to weaken and corrupt the mind—with the addition of unprincipled and easily bribed domestics, ready to forward this latter part of the education to the best of their power. “What!” will they exclaim, “could save Emma from this contagion?” Nothing, if she had staid there till she was seventeen; but, by good fortune, her father was a little disgusted with some of the items in Madame Delavaux’s bill—such as hire and tax of a carriage, for the young ladies to practice getting in and out, and a master to instruct them in that necessary accomplishment; to Sergeant —, of the 3rd Guards, for drilling three times a week; and several other little *et ceteras* that induced a plain, straight-forward man, like Mr. Legh, to fear that those sort of places, if they had *some* good, had also *much* bad in them.

Emma, therefore, luckily for herself, left this refined and distinguished establishment when she was little more than fourteen, and, being then small of her age, she looked younger, and, therefore, was not admitted into the society of the higher classes, who treated the girls of her age even lower than they deserved, lest they

should intrude on their plans and habits, and discover their secret schemes. Perhaps it was fortunate for her, also, that she was not popular amongst the elder girls, most of whom were daughters of rich mercantile persons.

Country gentlemen in these days cannot afford to pay three hundred pounds per annum for the education of each daughter, and in the large establishments of the nobility, and higher class of gentry, it is, happily, the fashion to make the nursery and the school-room a material part of the domestic arrangement.

But it not unfrequently happens, that those who owe their riches to accidental circumstances, not to inheritance, having married when in humbler circumstances, find their wives neither qualified, nor inclined to superintend the education of their daughters, and, fancying that what is *expensive* must be *perfect*, place their girls in these seminaries.

Amongst the girls at Madame Delavaux's there was only one with whom Emma formed any intimacy, and that arose from their being each deprived of a mother's care, and each rather despised by the other girls, because when questioned, (as was usual on first coming

into the society) as to the number of servants their respective fathers kept, and the size of his house, &c., their inferiority was stamped.

We have been assured by a daughter of one of the first commoners in the kingdom, whose large mansion is distinguished for its elegance and hospitality, that being questioned at one of these seminaries, by her school-fellows of how many staircases there were at H****? answered *thirteen*, and for ever afterwards she was called *Miss Staircase*, and when called on to name the number of her father's servants, having recourse to her fingers, to reckon them by their employments, enumerated a *brewer*, a very necessary person in a large country establishment; whenever she returned to school after the holidays, the first question asked her was, How does the *brewer* do?—and this is *fashionable* and refined EDUCATION!!!

The variety of new feelings that crowded on Emma's mind, when she shut her door at night, induced her to throw herself into a chair, to think over them. Some little feeling of vanity we may allow, at finding herself such an object of attention; we cannot blame her if she substituted the word admiration, for such it decid-

ly was. But this feeling was fully redeemed by the vexation and perplexity it gave her.

“What!” said she to herself “am I to do? these men are all strangers to me, and yet they are ready to quarrel for my notice; two of them are old men, what can they mean? and Lord John Leslie is so much above me in rank he can only be laughing at me: how can I act? what can I do? would I had a mother or an elder sister! Alas I am alone! I have no opportunity to ask Lady Tintern, and indeed she is so much my superior in every respect, I am afraid she would laugh at me; I cannot write to Mrs. Graham, for she professes not to understand the ways of the world as it now is. If I were with Sophy, I could ask her advice, but I cannot describe my situation so that she would understand it, there is something about it that I cannot write. I could not tell her, even if I could remember them, all the silly things that are said to me, she would think me so very vain and foolish; and I could not, if I would, describe the manner in which they are said, which makes the material part of the impression. Oh dear! oh dear! I wish I had not come here! I am sure there is more pain than pleasure to be found amongst these fine

folks—if Mrs. De Cameron was a kind, friendly sort of person, I might apply to her—but some how or other, I am sure I don't know why—I feel she hates me—I believe I know all the instructions my dear father gave me, but I will read them over again. Why! why! was he so kind to let me come here? or, why did he not come here also to take care of his poor child?"

A flood of tears followed this soliloquy, they always bring relief in vexation, as in sorrow, and looking for the key of her work-box did her good also ; she began, before she had found this precious paper, to fancy that she was a little tired and nervous with all the exertions of the day, and therefore disposed to see all *en noir*. The paper found, she kissed it, and felt it had some power of protection. We must edify our readers by transcribing its contents.

Mem., No. 1.—To attend in every thing to Lord and Lady Tintern's wishes, particularly to those of the latter.

Mem. 2.—If you want advice, and cannot get it from them, apply to the governess.

"Alas!" exclaimed Emma, as she read this, "the governess *talks* nothing but German, and *understands*

so little of French, she cannot comprehend what I say to her."

Mem. 3.—Never to omit an early walk before breakfast if possible, but not to go rambling by yourself: join either the governess, or even the nurses and children for protection.

This injunction Emma had strictly followed, and had enjoyed the fresh air, and amused herself with the children.

Mem. 4.—To let me know if you want any thing, are ill, or not happy, though the latter I think impossible.

"My dear, dear, father! mentally said Emma, how little do you, in the innocence and affection of your heart, guess what your poor girl feels, and how possible it is to be *miserable*, surrounded by all that ought to make me happy!"

Mem. 5.—Write to me often.

"This I can do, though I cannot comply with the injunction before it."

Writing to her father, and its difficulties occupied her mind; and after a longer period of watchfulness than belongs to youth and health, she fell asleep in the midst of composing this letter.

She rose early and refreshed, and before her little friends appeared on the lawn opposite her windows, which was to be the signal for joining them, she had written the following letter :

Stoke Park, April,

Dearest Papa,

You desire to hear that I am well and happy ; the first I always am, thank God—and the second I ought to be *here*, for every body is kind to me. Lord and Lady Tintern do all they can to make me as happy as possible. I am to have a part in the play they are going to act, it is a very short one, and I have already learnt it. I feel I ought not to believe all that such very polite people say, though they tell me I do it pretty well, but I hope to do it better on Monday night, after the practise of yesterday. I wish you were coming to see this play, dear papa, and yet I think seeing you there would flurry me more than strangers. Lord Tintern said he should ask you, but I know how busy you always are, and therefore I will now only tell you that

I am ever,

Your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

EMMA LEGH.

Emma read this letter over twenty times—not a usual thing when she was writing to her father, but then her letter spoke the genuine feelings of her heart, and that heart was cheerful and happy. There was something of mental reservation in this—a want of sincerity that pressed on her conscience; not that there was any deviation from truth—every body was kind to her—she ought to be happy! but she was not—this kindness was painful to her—her own feelings of inferiority made it oppressive, though it was not meant to be so—she hoped she should get a little used to these things, and then she would feel them as she should. Not merely a walk, but a little healthful, merry running and scampering with the children, sent her to the breakfast table with the freshness of Hebe—but she could not look one way, because she encountered Lord John with his eyes fixed on her, with a sort of melancholy earnestness, and the Count on the other, trying, by every possible means, to engage her attention, and acceptance of *tous ses petits soins*.

When they were rising from the breakfast table, Lady Tintern begged Emma would go with her to her dressing room, as she wanted her dress, as Cathos, to be fitted and arranged. Mademoiselle Fanchon had not

failed in her part, the dress, under Lady Tintern's direction, was appropriate, and it fitted most beautifully ; but Emma's pretty brown hair *must* be *crêpé* ; she could not bear to look at herself so metamorphosed, but Lady Tintern exclaimed :

“ Well, now I am convinced I am right, though there has been great disputing whether your hair should, or should not, remain in those pretty natural ringlets ; the men are all against me, but they always fancy nature is never to be counteracted ; but, for the part of Cathos, you must be dressed *a la mode Françoise*, and I have no doubt when they see you, I shall have them all of my opinion.”

Emma coloured deeply at the idea of having been a subject of conversation and dispute.

Lady Tintern saw the change of colour, and said “ Don't be alarmed, my dear, any thing serves for men to contradict us women, and Mrs. De Cameron is always ready to argue any thing, from a head *crêpé* to a problem in Euclid—but I have taken *you* under my especial protection, and in virtue of that, I will not let those idle men torment you—I see they annoy you, but never mind, the Count is like all Frenchmen, flattery is meat,

drink, and clothing to them, and they bestow it also with a liberal hand—but it is only his way—he means only that you are young and pretty, and as such to him irresistible."

"I am sure," said Emma, with a sigh, "I wish he had any body better to bestow his attentions on, for I am very unworthy."

"Oh, my dear, don't make a sorrow of what most young women in the world of your age would think a great source of amusement, quite a good joke; and though I would not suspect him of infidelity to you, yet, as the house fills, which it will begin to do to-day, he will have more subjects for his flattery, and you may escape what you seem to consider a persecution—I won't promise you so much for your other admirer, Lord John, he is such a determined swain, he never can exist without being desperately in love, or fancying himself so—but you must not mind him either, for he means nothing but conquest; that is his passion. I recommend you to make the most of Mr. Fitz Gibbon, he is quite safe, and is a very improving person for a young woman, he knows exactly what she ought to be—and piques himself on having formed many that were not at

first promising. I don't recommend you to the *friendship* (if she has such a sentiment in her composition,) of Mrs. De Cameron, for I see you dislike her, and read her character—nor shall I do so by Lady Anne Lawton, who is coming to-day with her father—on the contrary, I would *warn* you of her—she loves to amuse herself at every body's expense, and treats every person, and every thing, *haut en bas*, as made solely for her convenience, or amusement—but she will do you one service, she will keep Lord John in order, he is afraid of her."

This intelligence gave great pleasure to Emma, but it was soon damped by Lady Tintern saying, in the gentlest, and kindest voice—and her manner was at all times particularly captivating, and towards Emma it was quite affectionate,

" By the bye, you will, I hope, forgive my offering you a little counsel on the subject of dress : I perceived yesterday, you had on a *pink* gown, with *blue* shoes, gloves, and ribbons. Lady Anne is a great critic in dress, and perhaps would have laughed at, what she would have called, the "bad taste" of this :—you will recollect my love, if you have not shoes that match your gown, always wear white, and I am afraid white gloves

will always be indispensable *here*. If you are not provided, I will send a dozen pair into your room, and I do think the best thing I can do for you will be to send Annette into your room, just to parade you, after you have been dressed by Mary—who, though a very excellent maid to the children, and Madame Gevois, has not much notion beyond that. If you say some little civil thing in French to Annette, she will lay down her life for you, though she is a little odd-tempered sometimes ; and let me caution you not to put your gloves on between the courses, or when you are not eating ; stay till the dessert is over ; and when you see me put on mine, is the time for you to do so—and, my dear, don't say *sir* to any body, *we* have left off being formal a long time. And now I must go, for I have a thousand things to arrange, and those tiresome scenes go so stiff, I am afraid we shall get into some scrape with them. If you have no books in your room, I will send you some for your amusement, though I do not exactly know your taste ; and if you see the children walking out, you can join them—I would not advise you to wander about the house, it is rambling, and intricate, and you may lose yourself."

Lady Tintern had small fear of Emma's losing herself, but she had made her observations, and was not willing that a young, inexperienced, amiable creature, should throw herself in the way to become a victim to Lord John's unprofitable love, and part with her heart and its best affections for a shadow.

CHAPTER VI.

LEFT to herself, Emma felt the full force of Lady Tintern's kindness, and the value of her advice, and protection; and, aided by that, she now, almost thought she could stand against even flattery and love; she felt some fear of this Lady Anne, but yet if she would keep Lord John's eyes from her, and prevent those little soft whisperings, those nothings, which he took every opportunity of pouring into her ears—she wondered why he *whispered* what might as well be spoken aloud, and were not, after all, half so flattering as what the Count addressed to her.

She was not aware of the impression that is, in the end, made by that exclusive devotion of look, and

manner. Those who practise it with most success, well know that, after all, they are not committed by it, they can aver, when called to account for it, most solemnly declare, they never, by word, or deed, went beyond the common intercourse of society ; and yet they sometimes occasion broken hearts, or, at the least, loss of health and happiness.

Emma's first employment, when Lady Tintern left her, was combing the *crêpé* out of her hair, and shaking her tortured locks into their own natural ringlets, she said, as she looked at herself in her glass, " Well ! nothing shall ever tempt me into that frightful fashion ! I am sure I look ten years older, I shall wear my hair so to act, but I would not have Mrs. Graham, or my own dear papa see me so studied, and tricked out, for the world ; I am sure neither of them would have known me."

She then occupied herself with her part, and repeated it according to Lady Tintern's hints and observations. Turning over some of the books Lady Tintern had sent into her room, she found one which interested her, and was just sitting down to its perusal, when a message from Lady Tintern called her to the theatre.

There she found assembled Count Lally Dunois, Lord John Leslie, Mr. Fitz Gibbon, Mr. Duprée, and Mrs. De Cameron. Lady Tintern's back was turned to the entrance ; but she heard, and knew Emma's footstep, and, without turning round, said,

“ Now, my dear Miss Legh, convince all these good people that I am right, and shew how well you look *crêpé*,” but on looking round at Emma, she exclaimed, “ Oh heavens ! you have undone it all ! ”

On which several of the men clapped, and said, “ Capital.”

Mrs. De Cameron, with a half malicious tone, said,

“ I was sure Miss Legh would have too much good taste to retain what must be so disguising to her.”

Lord John, who had, during this, walked round to the other side of Emma, almost behind her, said, very softly :—

“ It would be very difficult to persuade me, that any thing short of the powder and pomatum of our grandmothers could make that exquisitely lovely hair disguising.”

But this was said almost too low for any ear but that it was addressed to, to hear ; if the words did

not reach Mrs. De Cameron, the manner in which they were spoken was not lost on her.

“ Pray, Miss Legh,” said she, “ as you value your own peace don’t listen to Lord John Leslie, no one knows better than he does that the worst of poisons is that which is taken in at the ear.”

“ I most humbly thank you,” said Lord John, making Mrs. De Cameron a low bow, “ the skill you allow me can do no mischief whilst *you* act the part of Monsieur Chabert, and follow it with the antidote, before it can have touched the system.”

Mrs. De Cameron, though highly provoked, liked nothing better than bantering ; and immediately took this opportunity of attacking Mr. Fitz Gibbon, who had been one of those so grossly deceived, and began, with

“ Now Mr. Fitz Gibbon, you, who are a scientific man, do tell us, was Chabert’s all mere trick, did he really go into so heated an oven, or swallow prussic acid ?”

Mr. Fitz Gibbon turned a deaf ear to these questions, and called Lady Tintern’s attention to the way in which the different actors must go on and off the stage, as the space between the scenes was so narrow,

two people could not easily pass; much laughter was excited by the difficulty the Count would have in the last scene, when he was driven off, together with the musicians. Dunois did not at all like this, and offered to prove he was very little wider than Lord Tintern, bets were made, but interrupted, by a rehearsal of the prologue, which was written and spoken by Mr. Fitz Gibbon; it was of the usual kind in private theatres, imploring indulgence for humble, and unpractised efforts—but it concluded with a tolerable hit, that there was great consolation for inefficient actors in the present fashions, for, between enormous caps, hats and sleeves, those only who occupied the first rows could possibly obtain more than a glimpse, through a *wood* of blond, and ribbon, flanked by a *thicket* of sleeves.

The composition and recital met with approbation from all the party, excepting Mrs. De Cameron, who said it was an old fashioned sort of prologue, such as Goldsmith or Murphy wrote, a quite gone by thing, without genius or originality.

These observations were a little impolitic, but violent spirits often over-shoot their mark—she had a composition of her own to bring forward, and it would

have been more prudent to deprecate censure, than provoke it; but the good opinion she entertained of her own abilities, sometimes threw her off her guard.

“Now for the epilogue,” said Lord John. “Du-prée, you can help us there, I know you write such things.”

But he declared he had torn up, in despair, all his attempts, he could only speak,—not write, one.

Mrs. De Cameron caught at this opening—she had made an attempt, and would fetch it. Whilst she was gone,

“I wonder” said Mr. Fitz Gibbon, “how you, Lady Tintern, can tolerate that abominable woman, I am sure she would set nations together by the ears; she wants to manage every thing, and put every body else aside; do let us agree to vote her epilogue *infamous stuff!*”

“She ought to have fair play,” replied Lady Tintern, “you have had your turn, though, to own the truth, I don’t expect much from her performance, for she is one of those people, who, from trying at *every* thing, seldom attain to excellence in *any*, or I may say, success.”

“That I beg leave to deny,” said Lord John, “she certainly does generally obtain her end, she worries people into her plans.”

“That was not exactly my meaning,” said Lady Tintern. “I should have said she would be poetess, painteress, actress, &c., but hush, she comes to prove her pretensions to one of the characters.”

She read her own performance—the verses were better than was expected, but the idea of their being spoken in the character of the Comic Muse, occasioned much laughter; and Mr. Fitz Gibbon asked if Mrs. De Cameron meant to personate the character herself, and offered to design the costume; to that question she gave a negative, and the offer was therefore useless: how far the refusal was reluctant, we will not presume to judge.

It was proposed that Mr. Duprée should personate one—and perhaps the most engaging of the nine ladies, but he declared they were old hags, and he would have nothing to do with them. Nobody now a-days thought of invoking the Muses, when they took up a pen, they had long been *passé*, and as the epilogue must follow the farce of the Critic, why should not Mr. Fitz Gibbon

speak that in the character of Puff the author, as he had before spoken the prologue in that of manager."

This was a happy thought, and Mr. Duprée most readily offered to play the ghost of Sir Christopher Hatton ; and, when the party dispersed, he went to search the library for some portrait of the Lord Keeper, and stumbled on the lines we have already quoted, which so exactly describe his dress.

At dessert this subject was resumed, and Lord Tintern's opinion asked ; he assented to the arrangement, saying, " By the bye, we made a curious discovery when the scenes were putting up, a secret closet and some bundles of love letters, of, I suppose, Queen Elizabeth's time, were found."

" Excellent," exclaimed Mr. Fitz Gibbon, " do, Tintern, let me have the first perusal, I doat on musty old papers."

" They may make your fortune, Fitz Gibbon," said Lord John, " if you can work them up into a novel, Walter Scott and Lytton Bulwer may shut up shop ; we shall hear nothing else but, ' Have you read Fitz Gibbon's romance ? ' for you must not degrade those good old times by the modern name of novel.

You had better consult me before you begin, I can help you to a character or two, of desperate lovers, and forsaken damsels."

"I presume," replied Mr. Fitz Gibbon, "that you lady-killers might easily make novels out of your own *particular* adventures."

"Let me help you," said Mr. Duprée, "I am a steadier fellow than Leslie, I can give you a few hints of his adventures under the banners of Cupid," and with a grave bow to Emma, who sat opposite to him, "don't you think I can, Miss Legh?"

Emma coloured, and assented, and, though she hardly knew why, felt as if there was a little latent meaning towards herself. Hitherto Mr. Duprée had not, in the smallest degree, annoyed her with his admiration, or attentions, as the others had done; and she fancied he heeded her not, and yet perhaps he did the most justice to her character, best understood it, and felt the most disinterested admiration of its candour and simplicity.

He was one of a large family, had sisters, one of Emma's age, and perhaps as new to the world, and he felt how provoked he should be with Count Dunois,

and Lord John Lislie, if they had assailed his sister with such unmeaning attentions : he longed to be Emma's protector, and he ventured even to ask Lord John if he thought he was acting rightly, in his unqualified admiration of a young woman, who moved in a sphere of life so different from his own ?

“ I think nothing about the right and the wrong, in those things ; I leave that to parsons by profession, and parsons elect ; such *liaisons* amuse me, and life is insupportable without amusement that has some excitement attached to it. You know I cannot resist beauty, I ought rather to say loveliness, wherever I meet with it ; for, by the bye, this girl has no absolute beauty, but there is something fresh and genuine about her : I don’t know where the devil she has grown, but she is interesting, from being unlike the hacknied bazaar, and Almack’s girls, and one of her greatest charms to me is that she has no managing mother, and I might add, officious brother, like Your Honour ! I suppose you have an eye to her yourself, by the interest you take in her. I hear her father is some pettyfogging lawyer that does little jobs for Tintern, and helps him raise the wind, and is a rich old dog ; but you shan’t poach on

my manor, I will have her to myself whilst I stay here, for old Dunois, and his *galanterie* is not worth thinking about; when I am gone, and she is breaking her heart, pretty little dear! at the loss of my exquisite flattery and attentions, then *you* may step in as her comforter, and if you choose, make her your wife, and by and bye I will come down to your cottage and shoot, and renew my flirtations with Madame Duprée."

"There is no probable, I might almost say possible, chance of your having such an opportunity, for if I ever have such an article as a *wife*, I shall take care to keep her out of your Lordship's way, you may depend on it."

The Earl of Downham, and his daughter, Lady Ann Lawton had been expected to dinner, but came not, as a little accident on the road had detained them.

But they arrived in the evening: Lady Anne was so nervous at a horse having fallen down, and, as she fancied, died, whilst attached to their carriage, she begged to go directly to her room. Lady Tintern accompanied her, but she soon recovered, and hearing who were of the party, made her toilette and entered the drawing-

room just as Lord Downham had prosed over the history of the horse for the third time.

Those who knew Lady Anne crowded around her with their enquiries and congratulations on her escape from being overturned, when the wheeler fell, and for a moment dragged down his companion.

“Oh do !” she exclaimed “intreat papa, for my sake, to say no more about it, it quite makes me sick. I don’t think I shall recover it this month.”

Her month might include the space of fifteen minutes, and some seconds more or less, at the end of which time she was laughing with Fitz, as she and many others always called him, and beckoning Edward Duprée said,

“Do tell me who is that little rustic, that Lord John is so devoted to ? as usual, he is playing Philander ; is she one of Lady Tintern’s hundred and fifty governesses ? or one of my Lord Tintern’s thousand and one Scotch cousins ?”

“I am only able to give you negative information,” returned Mr. Duprée, “she certainly is *not* a governess, and as she has not in the smallest degree a Scotch accent, she cannot be one of the army of Scotch cousins you suspect Lord Tintern of possessing.”

“ You are are a provoking wretch, Duprée, for you never give one a straight-forward answer ; or rather you never give one any real information : well, this will be something to hunt out. I love a dear little mystery, and Lord John’s passion will afford some amusement, to counteract it ; I enjoy plaguing him, *et son cœur tendre* : if I had known of his living here, I do think I should have dressed up my maid, who is really a pretty *manière* person, and passed her off to him as some *émigrante*, for she has lived with some of the *famille royale* and knows a good deal about them ; I should not have disliked taking in Lady Tintern, only she would never have forgiven me. Do tell me what we are to have here besides these plays, for they can only last a few hours. Is it not horridly dull here ?”

“ Whatever it may *have been*,” said Mr. Duprée, “ no place can be dull where your ladyship is, your wit must enliven even the cave of Triphonius.”

“ Provoking creature, there you are at your evasions again, I am sure you were born for a lawyer, and I hope you will not miss your vocation ; if you can prevail on yourself to give a downright answer to a single question, do tell me why Lady Tintern, in her wisdom,

chose a play and a farce with so few women characters in it, if she had had the *School for Scandal*, or the *Heiress*, I would have acted Lady Teazle, or Lady Emily, and you would have made a charming Joseph Surface."

"Your most obedient humble servant! No doubt you would have made an incomparable Lady Teazle—that would have been *your* vocation; or perhaps you would have preferred being a delectable Mrs. Candour."

"Abominable creature! Well, but my question?"

"I really cannot give you what you call a *down-right* answer to it without offending you, and as you will say libelling your sex."

"Then I must have it positively, or I will not speak to you for three days."

"Perhaps then——but I am ashamed."

"Go on, I will have it."

"Perhaps then, because it is so difficult to make ladies agree in such a case, all want to play the Lady Emily, or the principal part."

"You wretch! that is a libel indeed! but pray enlighten me: have these good souls quarrelled yet? for I should delight in working up a good, wholesome,

rousing quarrel ; there is something exciting and sublime in seeing people in a towering passion.”

“ Your only chance, Lady Anne, of a quarrel here, is between Mrs. De Cameron and Fitz Gibbon, one has written a prologue, and the other an epilogue ; and you know there is an old proverb of what wits are to each other ; but I rather think Lady Tintern will spoil your sport there : by the bye, Lady Anne, you might bind Mrs. De Cameron to you for life, if you would speak her prologue in the character of the Comic Muse ; and I should be the most devoted of your servants for giving me such a coadjutor, for I am destined to personate in it the ghost of Sir Christopher Hatton, the builder of this house.”

“ Charming ! charming, I shall delight in it : do you propose it to Lady Tintern, and let me take the M.S. up with me to night, that I may learn it.”

“ Since you have made me the Stoke Park gazette extraordinary,” said Mr. Duprée, “ I must tell you of another source of amusement : there has been a discovery of a secret closet, and love letters three centuries old, found in it, and a casket and pictures, and I know not what.”

“ Oh, for heaven’s sake, tell me who has got them !”

“ Fitz Gibbon, Lord Tintern gave them to him, that he might make a novel out of them.”

“ Do, thou best of men, go and ask him for them that I may look at them.”

“ That I am sorry to say is quite impossible ; he is, as you see, busy, writing in a corner, beyond all noise, and I know he is altering his prologue, and poets will not be disturbed, and indeed I do not think he will relinquish his prize for a moment, though he may perhaps show you the miniatures.”

“ I shall never rest till I see these letters, I do think I could make a novel out of them as well, if not better, than he can.”

“ I have no doubt, if you chose it, you could make one without any such assistance.”

“ Do you really think so ? I have had a great mind to do so, and bring in all my acquaintance, and tell their adventures, and all their little private histories. I am sure it would be as good as Lady ——, who you know is called ‘ the best lady authoress of the age.’ Now, for example, Lord John Leslie, and all his loves,

what a capital figure he would make in it: then Lord Tintern, so wary and diplomatic, taking his tea by stratagem: and I would have *you* too."

" Surely not, I am a great deal too tame, and every day person, for such a purpose."

" Not at all, there would be Lord John, a lover sighing over a sonnet made to his mistress' eyebrow; and you, Mr. Propriety, giving him good advice, or comforting his dulcinea when he forsakes her; I would make you a sort of Methodist parson lecturing every body."

" Then you would not draw my character from the life; I should be a creature of your fertile imagination, for I am neither a parson, nor a methodist."

" Oh! but you are on the high road to both, your *over-good* people always end so."

" But how do you, Lady Anne, know, that I am *over-good*: I may be *over-bad*, for any proof you can bring to the contrary."

" If you are, you are a hypocrite, and that would be still more interesting—but I see Lady Tintern is preparing for our departure to bed."

Upon her approaching, and hoping Lady Anne

would feel no ill effects from her accident, she answered,

“Oh! I am such a poor nervous creature, I dare say I shall dream all night of dying horses: there is only one way to prevent it—giving me something else to think of. I hear, from Duprée, you want a Comic Muse, do let me act the part, and give me the epilogue to learn to-night.”

“I hink we have decided otherwise,” replied Lady Tintern.

“No! no! no! I must have something to do in your play—do Mrs. De Cameron, (who was coming from the other end of the room, where she had been tormenting Mr. Fitz Gibbon,) do let me be *your* Comic Muse, I will do it to perfection—trust me.”

And, though Lady Tintern did what she could to suppress this plan, Lady Anne carried her point so far, as to have the original epilogue given her to learn, and then it was agreed it should, next day, when both had been heard, be decided whether it should be spoken as it was written, by her, or in an altered state, by Puff.

What had become, during the evening, of Emma? There had been at dinner some country neighbours, Sir

Isaac Hartington, his lady, and two daughters. He was an old acquaintance of Lord Downham's, and had been asked to meet him. He lived about ten miles from Stoke Park ; the old cronies met with pleasure, and talked over their youthful days, and school frolics long passed ; they had been youngsters serving together in the American war, and they mutually recollected anecdotes of that struggle, that amused the company during dinner. But Lady Anne had no acquaintance with Sir Isaac's family, she called them *natives* from the back settlements, perfect savages, and would have ridiculed them, if there had been any thing about them that could be made ridiculous ; but her ingenuity could find none. They were quiet people, whose dress, and manners, accorded with their station ; they knew Miss Legh by name, and took very kind notice of her, she hoped this would keep Lord John off, but he found a place behind the sofa where the Miss Hartingtons sat with Emma, and continued to whisper, look, and sigh. They were of course a good deal surprised, they just knew him as a London man, who had the reputation of being a great flirt, but this seemed almost beyond the usual license of flirting.

It was evident that, though Emma might be a little distressed by being so pointedly followed, yet it was done in such an insidious way, that the rest of the company might have supposed either of the other ladies the object of his attentions, if they had not made previous observations. Miss Hartingtons saw that she could not help being flattered by it; it was impossible she should be otherwise by the devotion of a man of his rank, and agreeable manners, especially if she was ignorant of his general character. They wished they could have enlightened her, but that was impossible—they did the next kindest thing, they mutually determined not to mention to any one the observations they had made—they would not mar the thing, if it was serious, by raising a report, that might perhaps have no foundation—nothing might be meant beyond the amusement of the present hour; if she had been a friend of theirs they should have trembled for her happiness, for there is no crevice too small for love to creep in at, and the mother of mischief may be no bigger than a midge's egg.

CHAPTER VII.

IT is not in the midst of a large party that any one can analyze their own feelings, if they are so disposed, and especially Emma Legh, who found herself enveloped in so many little nameless *etiquettes*, she was called on to watch her words, and actions, on the most trivial occasions, lest she should commit any *gaucherie*.

She found the manners of the aristocratic class so very different from what she expected. Lady Tintern was very kind in giving her little hints, some of them were of the most trivial kind, at least so thought Emma, though by those she was living amongst, they were considered important. Madame Delavaux had made

her young ladies bring a silver fork, and at home Emma had continued this luxury, and had even persuaded her father into the occasional use of one ; but she found it so differently used and handled from what she had been taught. But what surprised her most was the degree of (what she thought rudeness) with which fine people treated each other ; the way they lounged about ; and Lady Anne Leslie astonished her by her loud voice, and her boisterous laugh, and by the names she called people ; those she liked, man, woman, or child, were the dearest ! the most interesting ! the most beautiful creatures ! in the universe—and those she did not like, were, without any real regard to the truth of the matter, wretches ! horrors ! *bêtes* ! &c. ; but though these were subjects of occasional reflection, they did not occupy the principal share of Emma's cogitations when she retired this evening, and abandoned herself to reflection.

Lord John's attentions were too pointed for her to conceal from herself that, even with the most humble opinion of her own attractions, they were directed wholly, and exclusively to her ; she had avoided him as much as possible, there was a sort of timid feeling,

almost amounting to fear, about her ; but in spite of this, he would not be avoided.

The Miss Hartingtons, who had been so kind and good natured in their notice of her, what must they think ! Would they be likely to say any thing about it in their neighbourhood ! they knew her father, and she would not, for the world, he should hear of it ; he would perhaps fetch her home ; and she was really beginning to like the style of life she was now in ; it was, to be sure, very different from what she was used to at home. There days passed so quietly, and so like each other, a week, nay a month, was at an end before she was the least aware of it ; now a day would furnish recollection for a month ; at first she had been frightened and unhappy, but now she understood things better, was more used to the habits of higher society, and thought she should learn a great deal that might be useful to her ; in short she fancied, without being at all aware of it, that she should learn in time to be a fine lady, like Lady Tintern, for she was most captivating and charming.

Emma did not whisper, even to her own heart, the

means by which such an enviable situation might be attained ; to imagine herself not *unworthy* of it was a great step for a timid mind to take, in four or five days ; neither did she venture to probe her own heart. At first Lord John and his attentions, like every thing else at Stoke Park, had alarmed and distressed her, but now he was either altered in his manner, or she had got used to it ; she no longer coloured when he came up to her—she expected him to do so. In short, something pleasant was creeping over her whole feeling towards him ; had she been a little older, or a little more experienced in the ways of the world, she might in the words of the song have said,

‘ Tell me, my heart, can this be love.’

Though, to such a question, she would fearlessly have answered No.

Let us assure our young and inexperienced readers, when they begin to *like* marked attentions, Cupid’s bow is bent, and his arrows are pointed at their hearts. We do not offer this observation to the worldly and establishment-hunting Misses ; they have nothing natural, or genuine about them, their motto is,

‘A little love when nursed with care,
Will lead a heart, and lead it far.’

Emma had that night ‘pleasing dreams and slumbers light,’ and when she joined the breakfast table, Lady Anne for the first time noticed her, by saying, without any introduction,

“What a nice run you have had on the lawn with those dear little children, I longed to have come down and joined you; but I could not get Lizette to finish my hair, I do believe she did it on purpose, for fear I should derange all her handy-work; but I should never have picked up such a beautiful bloom as you have done; should I, Lord John?”

This reference of course heightened Emma’s already brilliant colour, but Lord John carelessly said,

“Oh, Lady Anne, you are a pale beauty, you want no *rouge*, either natural or artificial, it would spoil you, Juno was painted pale.”

Lady Anne put up her lip, and with a very arch look, which said, even stronger than words could, “You shall smart for this, depend upon it!” but, as if determined to baffle her, he took his seat at some distance from Emma, and, for once, seemed willingly to

leave her to Count Dunois ; *he* always bored her excessively ; he stared at her, put his ugly face so close to her's that she sometimes started away—he was more disagreeable this morning than ever—or at least she felt him so."

It often happens that we dislike, or fancy we dislike, a thing when we have it, and regret it when it is gone, especially if it administers to our vanity or our self-love. Emma had as small a share of either as could belong to any one of her age and pretensions. And yet, much as she had thought herself worried and tormented by Lord John's attentions, she was a little, only a *very* little, she was *sure* it was only a *very-very* little, mortified at his desertion.

Lady Tintern had told her not to mind him, she thought she had followed the advice ; and the same kind friend told her that Lady Anne would keep him in order, and this she found true ; she had a proof of its truth before her ; therefore she was quite angry with herself for not being *glad* she had got rid of him. Yet she was *not* glad. Then to be sure he was an agreeable man, with fascinating manners, though really inordinately selfish, for he did on all occasions what pleased his fancy, or whatever gratified his vanity, with-

out the slightest consideration for the feelings of others, or without any check, or restraint from principle ; but he had a soft voice, and a devotion of manner she had not been accustomed to ; and an *apparent* indifference to himself, that was any thing but his real feeling. Such was his carriage towards women ; with men he was haughty and rude. Emma had heard of the fickleness of men ; but this character she connected with Dragoon officers with large mustaches and blue jackets, “they love, and they ride away,” she knew it was a part of their profession.

But she had not time for all these reflections during breakfast, for Dunois was elaborately describing a famous picture of Titian’s, which he said *she* reminded him of, and he gave a minute description of cherry lips, penciled eye-brows, and all the other charms, till she was quite annoyed by his hyperbole, more especially as she saw Lady Anne was laughing at him, and trying to make Lord John do the same ; but without success, for he preserved the appearance of perfect indifference, almost inattention : this Emma could not understand, it was not *like* his usual manner, even to see her annoyed, unnoticed.

As they were leaving the breakfast room Lord Tintern said:—

“I suppose, Lady Anne, they have told you that your horses arrived yesterday; you will give your own orders when you want to use them.”

“Oh, thank you, I always take care of myself; I mean to ride at half past two, and I suppose I shall have some equerries, does no one else ride?”

Lady Tintern said, “I cannot to day.”

Lady Anne turned abruptly round to Emma, saying, “you never ride, I suppose?”

“I have not my pony here,” was the modest reply.

“Miss Legh,” said Lord Tintern, “is very humble about her pony, as she calls it, for it is really one of the prettiest little thorough-bred things I know, and I offered her father his own price if he would have let me had it for Lady Tintern, but nothing would tempt him to part with an animal that carried his daughter well, and that she was fond of. I am sorry I did not think of desiring him to send it here for you, Miss Legh, but if, after such a horse, you will condescend to try Lady Tintern’s mare, I will order it for you. I know you are going to say you have no habit here,

but I am sure Geraldine can lend you one, you are nearly of a size, though she has not your height, but habit petticoats, I believe, now are made six yards long, let the height of the Lady be what it may."

During this time, Lady Anne and the gentlemen had been disputing over a paragraph in the papers with initials, as to who was meant by the scandal.

Till the hour of luncheon, Emma was occupied in perfecting herself in her part of Cathos, and immediately after it, the equestrian party set off. Lady Anne had Mr. Fitz-Gibbon and Lord John on each side of her, and Emma rode between Mr. Duprée and a Mr. Lisbourne, a new arrived visitor; Lord Tintern, on the plea of business, excused himself from being of the party, but deputed Mr. Fitz-Gibbon to be his deputy as chaperon, and commended Miss Legh to his particular care, as he dared not affront Lady Anne by supposing she wanted protection when on her horse.

"Very well!" she exclaimed, "so, if I am drowned, or break my neck, you will none of you be in danger of a coroner's inquest of man or woman slaughter, take care I don't put you in jeopardy, out of revenge."

Mr. Lisbourne was to act the part of Sir Fretful

Plagiary, he was a lively, agreeable man, and, between him and Mr. Duprée, Emma was not only amused, but found herself with people of information ; there was one drawback, it was Lord John's conduct, he came not near her, but yet she saw, and felt, he was watching her, if there was any difficulty to be passed.

They came to one in a rivulet, which was more than usually swollen ; Lord Tintern's old groom warned them it might be deeper than they expected, and that there were better places to pass it at.

Lady Anne was one of those obstinate, wilful persons who always do that which they are advised *not* to do, and was also a bold horse-woman ; so, taking up the long skirt of her habit petticoat in her hand, she dashed through the rivulet ; Lord John checked his horse, who was attempting to follow, and turning short round, took Emma's by the bridle, saying :—

“Lady Anne despairs assistance, but allow me, Miss Legh, to take you to a shallower ford, where you may cross without any danger to your habit.”

“I think,” said Mr. Lisbourne, “as you had one lady to take care of, Leslie, you might as well have left Miss Legh to us, I have half a mind to challenge you ofr it.”

“Lady Anne disdained my assistance,” was the reply, “but as I know every inch of this country from hunting in it, Miss Legh will, I am sure, forgive my interference.”

When the party collected on the other side of the rivulet, Lady Anne’s groom was wringing some of the wet out of her petticoat, which, notwithstanding her precaution, had not wholly escaped, she said:—

“You are entitled, Lord John, to my *eternal* gratitude for your care of me.”

On his attempting to speak, “Oh, don’t give yourself the trouble of an excuse, I might have been drowned like a puppy so long as Miss Legh or Lady Tintern’s mare, I don’t pretend to guess *which*, had been safe.”

The way in which this was said was not in a tone of pique, for she had rejected his assistance, but there was a provoking air of tormenting him in it, and perhaps of annoying Emma also, who, without any pretensions, without ever having added *the one* to the “thousand ladies” that ride in Hyde Park, was an excellent horse-woman, indeed, so good as to provoke Lady Anne, that a little rustic should rival her in any point.

Lord John defended himself by assuring her that “he knew the place she crossed at was perfectly safe, only too deep for any lady’s petticoat to escape wetting, but, as she was obstinately bent on refusing his assistance, he had ventured to offer it *where* he hoped it would be accepted, especially as he saw neither of Miss Legh’s attendants seemed at all aware of the depth of the water, and Lady Anne had set the example of disregarding Lord Tintern’s groom’s advice ; and, besides, Miss Legh was on a much lower horse than Lady Anne’s.”

But she was not, or pretended not to be, appeased, and according to her own maxim, that quarrelling is very amusing, her’s and Lord John’s lasted the rest of their ride, and many little hints of her’s were overheard by Emma, into whose mind they made so deep an impression, that, between vexation and fatigue, she arrived at home so exhausted—she went immediately to her room, wrote a little note to Lady Tintern, begging her kindly to excuse her at dinner, as she felt that, without some rest and repose, she should be unable to perform her part in the evening, when the theatre was to be lighted up, and a dress rehearsal performed, not only

to the tenants and servants, but to several families in which there were children ; the clergyman's, who, with his wife, dined there ; the apothecary, and the banker, who was the principal shop-keeper of Reading, these two last only came in the evening, but they were to be gratified by occupying the front row of the sofas.

We have, as yet, said nothing of the origin of Count Lally Dunois, an omission we ought to be ashamed of, considering he was, at least in his own opinion, a person of considerable importance. But we must now bring him and his history a little before our readers.

He was born a short time previous to the French revolution of 1789. His father, one of the *ancienne noblesse*, was not only one of the few who rallied round their monarch, but he defended him so ably in the National Assembly, that he paid the price, during the reign of terror, of his loyalty on the *guillotine*. His wife, with her infant, fled to England, and was afterward *dame d'honneur* to the *Duchesse d'Angoulême*.

The count was educated at Maynooth college in Ireland, and it was his mother's intention he should have been an ecclesiastic, but not very much relishing some of the restrictions connected with the profession,

he deferred entering it ; the restoration of the Bourbons arrived, and found him at liberty to push his fortunes in the court of the restored family ; and he fondly hoped that the estates of his father, as well as his honours, would be returned to him. But he was one of those whose claims it was impossible for Louis XVIII. to satisfy, as one of Napoleon's generals, and one of those also who had sworn allegiance to the Bourbons, was in possession of his property ; a place about the king's person, and some money in the French funds, were all that remained to him.

His mother dying from the effects of fright and agitation, during the exile of the hundred days, the Count, disgusted and disappointed, preferred moderate independence in England, to the little consideration he now met with at Versailles.

His education had given him a taste for literature, and he fancied he understood English so perfectly as to be able to write a tragedy in that language ; he accordingly composed one on the story of Guillaume Tell ; but had not yet prevailed on any manager to bring it on the stage : the utmost he had obtained was an audience of friends, most of them foreigners, to hear him read it.

And there was a story current about town, for the literal truth of which we do not pretend to vouch, though we have it on the authority of Mr. Fitz Gibbon, who professes himself to have been one of the auditors—that out of sixty persons assembled on the occasion, there was only one lady of eighty, whose old-fashioned good breeding kept her there till the *finale* of the reading, and it was conjectured, she had slept through most of it, and was only roused, by her servants coming in search of her, being alarmed at her staying out so much beyond her usual hour.

In the course of the morning ride, the Count had accidentally discovered that Lady Anne Lawton was a great heiress. He had before discovered she was *une peu capricieuse, mais n'importe*, sixteen thousand a year, and a fine place must have something to weigh against it. He was now a citizen of the world, and if he had not much of its wealth, he had sixteen quarterings to his arms, and one of them contained *les fleur de lis*. He was *not* very young, so much the better for the *estate*, he was less likely to squander it. He *was* very fat, but he buttoned his coat as tight as possible, and was reported by his valet to have some difficulty in

introducing himself into the other parts of his dress ; he was only after all “*a stout gentleman*” he had often heard Englishmen called by that name, no doubt it was an *honourable* distinction ; in short, after taking more than usual pains with his dress, destroying at least two pair of cobweb stockings, and buckling his black satin stock so tight as almost to produce strangulation ; after surveying himself thoroughly in a large old fashioned mirror that hung slanting from the far end of his room, he thus soliloquised before he went down to dinner :

*Eh bien, many great heiresses do much worse, par di ! je suis noble, her father only a new earl of Ireland ! I have nothing to lose ; much to gain ; no rival here ! unless that Mr. Duprée ; he rather what his nation calls *whipper snapper*, he cannot compare with me, and I can fight him if he is troublesome—Allons, courage !*

All these operations had taken so much time, that the bell which announced “dinner was served,” rang before he had adjusted his last shoe-string ; and his thoughts being somewhat *égaré*, in his hurry he missed his way amongst the innumerable passages in which

the house abounded ; and if he had not luckily met a house-maid who directed him, he might have wandered about, and not have reached the table before the dessert.

The opportunity he thought his rank would give him of taking Lady Anne in to dinner was gone, but as he could not get next her to converse, it was a great piece of good fortune that the place left for him was opposite to her, he could “look unutterable things ;” and his losing his way, and his soup, the part of his dinner he valued most, so very much amused Lady Anne, that he was abundantly gratified for all his disasters, by her taking more notice of him than she had ever done before.

She was one of those uncertain persons with whom you might be a favourite in the morning, and an object of ridicule in the evening ; in their morning’s ride his horsemanship had made him the latter ; but he was now appearing in a new character, and was charming. What will not *hope* and *champagne* do !

We will not profane the word *love* by so naming Count Lally Dunois’ new passion, it was much more nearly allied to *avarice*. Once, and only once, during dinner did he look for, and enquire after Madlle. Legh,

and when told she was fatigued with her ride, he sacrificed his old passion to his new one, by shrugging up his shoulders, saying, "Lady Anne Lawton never can be tired."

During dinner, Lord Tintern, who had grown much interested about Emma, asked where she was? and was answered, by Lady Tintern, "That she was a little tired with her ride, and required some rest to be fit for the evening performance."

"Did the little brown mare behave well?" asked Lord Tintern, "what could tire her, for she is a great rider?"

"Oh! exclaimed Lady Anne, she has been all but drowned, for Lord John would drag her through the deepest part of Longdown brook, I think you call it."

"Indeed, Leslie, you ought to have known better," said Lord Tintern, "for if any one is acquainted with this country it should be you, who have hunted it ever since you could sit a horse."

"There are various versions of the same story," he replied, "you have Lady Anne's, some other time you shall have mine, I never call a lady's represe

tation in question : I trust I am quite innocent of Miss Legh's fatigue, I should be miserable if I thought I was not."

" I believe you, from the bottom of my heart, in that particular," said Lady Anne.

And even Lord John, who had that command of countenance which belongs to those who live much in the world, could not preserve his unmoved under this speech, and the pointed tone in which it was made : he coloured slightly.

Lady Tintern, with her usual tact, turned the conversation, by asking Mr. Manton some question about one of his parishioners : but Lady Anne's manner raised a suspicion in her mind that something more than the fatigue of the ride had overcome Emma, and she regretted that when she had gone into her room before dinner she had been so easily satisfied by her assurance that she was only a little fatigued, and should have needed no rest, if it had not been for the representation in the evening : the moment she returned to the drawing-room, she lighted her candle in order to go to her protégée, and then see how the theatre looked, and if there was light enough in it. Mrs. De Cameron most officiously said :

" Do, Lady Tintern, let me go up with you, if you are going to see Miss Legh, I am a most excellent doctress, I am sure all this is too much for her, and you know *I* can read her part to night to save her."

All these apparently kind offers Lady Tintern decidedly refused, saying,

" Really Mrs. De Cameron you are making a mountain out of nothing, I have seen Miss Legh, who is only a little tired with her ride, as I often am, and indeed better horse-women ; my little mare is not so easy as she appears to be ; I must go up to her, not to enquire after her health, for that I am persuaded is perfect ; but I desired her not to dress, as she was not coming down to dinner, but to put her costume as Cathos on at once, and I am going to see if that is as it should be ; but if you will be so good as to go to the theatre, and see how they have managed the lamps, I will join you there, before I change my dress."

This was not at all what Mrs. De Cameron intended, and by this arrangement she saw no chance of prevailing on Emma to give up her part ; but there was still a hope she might *fail in it*, on this evening's exhibition ; and on her way to the theatre she said to

herself, “what a provokingly decided woman Lady Tintern is, one may as well move a rock as turn her from her purpose, but it would be delightful to out-wit her at last, and oblige her to *ask* me to take the part.”

When Lady Tintern saw Emma, she was, though perfectly satisfied with her dress, struck with her unusual paleness.

“My dear little creature,” said she, “what did those wild folks do to you? I don’t think I shall ever trust you with them again; I thought Fitz Gibbon would have been steady himself, and kept others so; as for Lady Anne, she is as strong as her horse, you cannot do what she can, and she loves a little spiteful mischief to her heart.”

Emma felt the truth of this; but answered cheerfully “that she believed it was nothing more than not having ridden for some days that had tired her.”

“Well, we must repair the mischief as well as we can; you cannot go down looking as white as my hand-kerchief, and though I know how inferior my *rouge* box is to your own pretty colour, the difference will not be perceived when you are surrounded by so many lights, so sit down and let me touch you up.”

Those who have not from their infancy been told to kiss mamma carefully, not to rub off her *rouge*; those who live in a class of life where the use of it is not familiar, and who still persist in calling it *paint*, may have a faint idea of what Emma suffered whilst Lady Tintern was putting it on; she felt as if she was converted into *Jezebel* herself! it seemed to her unsophisticated mind, nothing short of a *crime* to practise such an imposition.

Minds unaccustomed in deception feel the first, though even a slight, deviation from rectitude, more strongly, more acutely, and severely, than much more serious errors, when the mind is hardened by intercourse with the worldly *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*: how lamentable that the first bright gloss of the mind should ever be worn off by the false practices and maxims of the world! it can never be *recalled*, and we fear it soon ceases to be *regretted*.

When Lady Tintern had left the room, Emma sat tormenting herself that the necessity had arisen for what Lady Tintern had done; but it was amongst her father's directions that she should, in every thing, be guided by her ladyship, little did he think she would *paint his daughter's face*!

She then ventured to look at herself in the glass ; she had often as high a colour from exercise, but she did not feel her face burn so, was it that horrid *rouge*, or the consciousness of it ? she did not discover it was both combined, but the sensation was so disagreeable, it made her venture to rub some of it off, and she felt the happier when she had done so, if she could have dared to rub it entirely off, she would have been *quite* happy ; but she tried, as it was, to think she was obeying her father, at least.

CHAPTER VIII.

EMMA was soon summoned to the Green room, and in common with actors, gentle and simple, was inclined to go on the stage and peep through the curtain ; but Mr. Fitz Gibbon reminded her of his caution not to look at the audience ; he assured her it was not at all a formidable one, old musty farmers, their wives and children, a parson, an apothecary, and the servants of the family, and visitors, who were altogether nothing more than pillars and posts.

Mr. Fitz Gibbon's prologue was spoken with great spirit, but the principal hits of the *forest of blond caps* and *the underwood of gauze sleeves*, would have been

entirely lost, but for two French waiting maids, who indifferently represented their ladies. We do not at this moment give the play bill, as those printed on pink or white satin were not yet out.

The first scene between La Grange (Mr. Fitz Gibbon), and Du Croisi (Lord John Leslie); and the second, where they declare to old Georgibus (Count Dunois), the ill usage of his niece and daughter, passed quietly, only exciting the silent wonder of the auditors, to most of whom it might as well have been in Hebrew. Mrs. De Cameron, as Marotte, had but little to say; when Lady Tintern, as Madelon, and Miss Legh, as Cathos, entered, a broad faced chubby boy of five years old, a farmer's son, called out “ Fa-ather fa-ather, I say, be that my lady dressed up ?”

The auditors were not of a class used to restrain their feelings, and having given their attention to what they did not understand, indemnified themselves by laughing at what they did comprehend; the laugh was catching, and ran through those who did, and those who did not know the joke.

Lady Tintern was excessively provoked, but seeing her coadjutor in spite of all the rouge *she* had so ad-

mirably put on, change colour, she thought it prudent to retreat, till tranquillity and decorum were restored.

Whilst Emma was recovering her composure, and Lady Tintern her temper, the mirth subsided, and the urchin's remarks were silenced by his father, almost at the danger of strangulation.

The rest of the play went off very fairly, the actors were sensible where it failed, and prepared to correct their errors at a future representation.

Lady Anne, as a muse, and the ghost of Sir Christopher Hatton, was a joke beyond the greater part of the spectators ; but Don Whiskerandos, Lord Burleigh shaking his head, came within even the comprehension of the provoking little urchin, whose throat escaping from his father's grasp, exclaimed, “What does that dumb man mean by shaking his head, Fa-ather ?”

On this occasion there were some who could not please, and therefore could not be pleased ; amongst these was Lady Anne ; she could not be dressed to her own satisfaction, and the labours of the toilette prevented her appearing during the performance, till she came on in her character at the close of it. Mr.

Duprée, as ghost, was inimitable, but the little attention *she* received, and the unbounded clapping bestowed on Sir Christopher Hatton's ghost, made her excessively angry, even though that applause was bought from the vulgar, so that the moment she joined the supper party she told Lady Tintern that “really the lights and the horrid smell of oil behind the scenes gave her such a head-ache, and made her so ill, she would not for worlds go through it again :” perhaps she expected to be a little coquettled with, for she hinted “if the theatre was lighted with wax candles, it might be endurable,” and she almost said, she might then be induced to make another trial ; but Lady Tintern was heartily glad the experiment had failed.

Not so Mrs. De Cameron, who tried what flattery would do, and to her aid called in Count Lally, a powerful assistant, especially under his present feelings : heaven and earth were ransacked by him for comparisons of excellence, her ladyship was not one muse, she was the nine united, Apollo and Hebe to boot ; he had seen the inimitable Madlle. Mars in such a costume, he had forgotten the character, but the gracefulness of *her* actions, and the perfection of *her*

enunciation would bear no comparison with her ladyship's ; indeed the world had reason to regret her place in society precluded the chance of often seeing a performance so exquisitely *charmante*.

It is wonderful, when people are out of humour, especially with themselves, what egregious flattery they will swallow, if it helps to restore their *amour propre*.

Lady Anne was conscious she had done the thing badly ; in attempting perfection and novelty, she had overstepped the mark, and she was half afraid had much outréed the character ; there was something in Duprée's countenance that shewed she had, he had hardly preserved his ghostly gravity, and there was a curl on Mr. Fitz Gibbon's lip, but in proportion to the keenness with which she felt all this, so great was her vanity, she determined eagerly to think Mrs. De Cameron and Dunois the *best* judges, one had travelled so much, was a pretty good classic, at least in her own estimation, she had disputed on the antique with Nibby the Antiquarian, and at Rome too ! and therefore must be a judge whether she looked the character—what could the others know about it ? Yet in spite of all this, she *felt* her failure, and determined her *nerves* should prevent

her doing it again, and she tried to make her indescribable head-ache as interesting as possible ; though she failed even there, for no one heeded her, excepting an enquiry from her father, who spoilt it, by saying,

“ I never thought you would be able to do it, but you know, Anne, you are never to be dissuaded, you must buy your experience,” but to this little wound, the balm of flattery was applied !

How had poor Emma fared ? After the first discomfort, she had gone very creditably through her part, and if she had reason to rejoice that Count Lally was detached from her, it only left the coast clearer for Lord John, and he was not backward in availing himself of it, nor in observing that Lady Anne was too much occupied with herself to give much attention to others.

Our readers in general must forgive us, and from the younger part of them particularly we most humbly solicit pardon and indulgence, if we do not relate all the little tender nothings that were this evening—the short part of it that included supper—poured into Emma’s ear, or describe the looks that accompanied them—or the soft musical tone in which they were uttered.

We are old—the world with us is in the “ sere and

yellow leaf," and we could not do justice to what is so evanescent—we might as easily catch the tints of a rainbow. But fleeting and fragile as these things are, there are two weak points on which they are calculated to make deep impressions—the heart—and the imagination!

This had been an important day in Emma's life—the *most agitating* she had ever passed ; how could she help thinking over it—how little could she guess that the so much dreaded part in the play was in fact the least distressing—she wished she could sleep and forget it all ; but if sleep comes to the weary body, it flies from the weary and anxious mind, and when she laid her throbbing temple and tried to shut her eyes, all came at once in vision more strongly before her ; she tried to forget—to forget was impossible—a vulnerable part was touched, where forgetfulness does not dwell : the imagination may forget, the memory may forget, but the heart *feels*, and it vibrates even more quickly at each returning recollection ; circumstances hardly heeded at the time gained strength by reflection.

After hours of restlessness, nature at last gave way, and Emma fell asleep, but waked in terror from her

short slumber ; she dreamt she was drowning, and fancied she felt all the agony of it ; but she thought Lord John Leslie rescued her, at the hazard of his life ; but when she turned round to thank him, he was metamorphosed into a *Cobra di Capella* flying from him, this awakened her.

It may often be easy to account for dreams ; they are mostly made up of the transactions of the day—the thoughts—the reading—or conversation with which we have been occupied—and a tincture of pleasure or pain are often given to them by the state of the nerves.

We are not going to investigate the “theory of dreams,” that has been ably done by a learned and amiable prelate, but as we are taught in scripture that angels watch over us, and particularly over the young and innocent—may they not?—we only ask the question of those better informed than ourselves—sometimes visit our slumbers when we have solemnly and humbly committed ourselves to *His* care to whom they are ministering spirits ?

If we may not in these pages be permitted to give the subject so solemn a turn, we may at least be allowed to say, that her guardian sylph did visit the sleeping

Emma, and inspire her dream. A little recovered from the terror it occasioned, she began to think—had it any meaning?—or what could it mean?—the more she thought the more she convinced herself it *could* mean *nothing*; she had had painful and horrid dreams before, especially if she had been frightened in the day. Yet Eve and the serpent presented itself to her imagination; but the next moment she reproached herself with injustice towards Lord John. He had kindly saved her from a wetting, and a cold, if from no other danger; she could not be ungrateful for that kindness, and his flattery was of so gentle and delicate a nature, that it was difficult to think it *was* flattery, and there was nothing of the serpent in it, for it was not tempting her to any forbidden fruit, it merely expressed an admiration of her beyond any other woman *there*, and who could, amongst those assembled at Stoke Park, come in competition with her as an object of those kind attentions? there was no vanity in this, for Lady Tintern could not be so talked to. Mrs. De Cameron was Lord John's unutterable aversion—he always called her *La Precieuse Ridicule*. Lady Anne he avoided—was afraid of her, and yet constantly contradicting her.

Emma thought she should be a better judge when the house was fuller, which it would be for the play, a few nights hence, and she could tell if Lord John's attention to her was more than the common place of his usual habit.

She could not very well analyze his conversation, she was not yet much used to be talked to by young men, especially of his grade ; she did not know how far they would go, and yet *mean nothing* :—she was determined to err on the right side, and believe *too little* instead of *too much*, and however some of his conversation might have stolen its way to her heart, her understanding reasoned against it.

She wished for her father's protection, and yet he would be an awkward person in the society where she was now placed, and he would not understand its ways, as she was beginning to do.

She rose this morning fortified with the idea that she had better, as much as possible, avoid Lord John, till she was *sure* he had nothing of the **Cobra di Capella** about him.

Natural good sense and good feeling will often stand in the place of experience. Emma was right in

her judgment and determination, but not so equal to its execution.

At breakfast the following morning, Lady Anne was tolerably restored to her own good opinion ; she inveighed violently against Lady Tintern's arrangements, which she protested had occasioned her failure, and she coaxed Mrs. De Cameron into good humour after the injustice she had done to her Epilogue, by the assurance, that if it had been got up at —— it would have been thought a great effort of genius.

Lady Anne was too much on the alert to-day for Lord John to lay aside his caution ; he avoided a seat next Miss Legh, and as she was making breakfast he positively required reminding, or pretended to do so, to offer her any assistance.

“ What can have happened to you, Lord John ? are you awake ? or have you dreamt over again your part, and are afraid to approach Madlle. Cathos ? ”

The mention of a dream brought Emma to her recollection, she coloured, and received the common place attentions that Lord John had been called on to pay her, as shyly and timidly as if the *Cobra di Capella* had really been before her.

Nothing was ever lost on Lady Anne, who declared, “there was something so extraordinary in the tea, she must have some fresh made, she was afraid Miss Legh was not well, really she did look pale now, and often changed colour, and as for Lord John he must be dreaming of some fair one he had left behind at Brighton, or had seen a glimpse of from an inn window, but never learnt her name.”

Lady Tintern, who had been detained in her nursery by one of her little girls being ill, now entered, and instantly perceiving the drift of Lady Anne’s mischievous observations, sent to Lord Tintern for the letters and papers which gave employment to all, and a new turn to the conversation of the party; and knowing Emma’s good nature, and extreme fondness for children, asked her to go with her after breakfast and see her little invalid, saying,

“ I am sure you will be so kind as to read a little story to Octavia whilst her sisters are at their lessons.”

This request was most readily acceded to. Lady Tintern added as he went to the nursery, “ I don’t offer you my mare to-day, for I think she fatigues you; but I will take you a little drive with me, and get you out of

Lady Anne's way, for if she must have something to torment, it shall *not* be *you*, my dear! and she is, besides, particularly ill-humoured to-day, from her, failure last night, but you must not mind her, I am only sorry the smallness of our present party has left you so exposed; but we shall be more at dinner to-day, and her attention, I hope, will be otherwise engaged, Lord John is always an object for her shafts; but he heeds them not: by the by, I must again caution you my dear Miss Legh, not to mind him. I hope, for your sake, for I see it always annoys you, that one or other of the Miss Rileys, who are coming here to-day, may occupy him; but there is, I am sorry to say, a fashion amongst the young men of the present day to direct their attentions, not exactly where they might most reasonably be expected. They fancy girls who go out in town are always on the *look out*, though Lord John is no prize for any body, for he is as poor as a church mouse; but when he is tired of making unprofitable love, which is *son métier*, he will, I dare say, find some city heiress with money enough to satisfy him—that is the plan of those younger brothers now."

Though Lady Tintern did not feel at all certain, that, notwithstanding his usual habits, Lord John might really in this instance mean *something*; for Emma's fortune was quite large enough to tempt him, and had it been in possession, instead of reversion (or rather dependent on her father's pleasure), it probably would have induced him to have serious intentions.

His eldest brother was a person of unbounded expense, and his father, the Marquis of Chester, had so embarrassed himself by repeatedly paying his son's debts, added to some electioneering business, in which he had been unsuccessful, that he was any thing but rich or liberal to Lord John (his only younger son), indeed his allowance to him was so small as to oblige him to live a good deal abroad.

But however this might be, Lady Tintern felt it prudent to represent it as she had done to Emma. She was sometimes inclined to regret she had taken charge of so young and engaging a person; but she found her so amiable, so natural, so *genuine* (for there was no other word that would describe her), and so capable of being made quite a "*sweet creature*,"

that her determination was to keep her more entirely under her own eye and protection; it was safest if nothing was meant, and she should soon judge if the contrary was the case.

CHAPTER IX.

As Mr. Morton, the rector of Stoke, was walking in the morning after the dress rehearsal, as it was called, he met Farmer Blunt, and, after talking to him on parochial business, said,

“ Well, farmer, how did you and your family like the entertainment last night? for I saw you all there.”

“ Why, your reverence,” replied Blunt, with some hesitation, “ though to be sure it was very kind and condescending of my lord to ask such as we, and very condescending too, I must say, of my lady to let herself down to play antics to please we, yet, if I must own the truth, I did not much fancy it. Punch and Judy to my mind is worth two of it; one can understand Punch beating his wife, and throwing his child out at window

to plague her, and I can laugh at those tricks the clowns at the fair plays old Pantaloony; but this was running in and out, I could make nothing of it, and when they got merry, and happy, and set a jigging, comes an old Don, and, for no rime or reason, turns them all out, and beats the fiddlers—poor stuff in my mind, sir."

"But you must consider, Blunt, it was in a language you could not understand, there was a part in English, perhaps you liked that better."

"Why no, sir, I could not find out the sense of that, to be sure it was past my bed time, and so I might be a little sleepy."

"That is very likely was the case," said Mr. Morton, "and listening, to people not used to it, brings drowsiness."

"With your pardon, sir, that's not always the case, I never sleeps when you preaches, more shame for me if I did, when you gives us such good doctrine."

"I thank you for your compliment, fariner, it is gratifying to me to know that my parishioners understand me. But if you did not like the play, your young people I suppose did?"

“Lord love you, sir, what is it that young folks *like* now a days? I am sure I can’t find out, unless it is every thing they cannot get, and nothing they can! There’s Nancy, who has been doing nothing but talk of this play, and thinking of it too, for this fortnight past. Why, she gets up this morning as cross as two sticks, would eat no breakfast, nor let me have mine in comfort, because I had not put her to a French boarding school, as farmer Franklin did his daughters, for then she could have understood all the ladies and gentlemen said; and what if she had, I dare say it was but nonsense and palaver. I am sure my children have no reason to say I have not done the best I could for their learning, for no sooner had I and my dame struggled through our first setting off, but I got a box with a hole in it for a hedication box, and every odd bit of money I had I put in it, sometimes little, and sometimes more; if I sold a load of wheat for more than I expected, or a lot of sheep, or may be a calf, I put all over and above the price I thought to get for it, into this box, and a very pretty sum it turned out, I assure you, sir, or I could not have put Nance for three years to Mrs. Pepperal’s boarding school, and then for a

year to the dress-making. But if I be not sorry for the first, I am sure I be for the last; I don't know what good it has done yet, but turn her head for the fashions, and make her spend all her time over her bits of clothes. I am sure when my dame, who has been as hard-working a helpmate as a man need wish for, can't see to mend and make my shirts, I shall be in a pretty ragged condition for all Madam Nancy will do. I caught her the other day over a book full of pictures of fine madams with high heads, learning to dress like 'em, and I was going to light my pipe with it, to give her a lesson, but I found it was Miss Cutout's book, and I should have to pay half a crown for it; and this comes of hedication; but this is not the worst, if I might tell my troubles to you, sir, who always so kindly listen to distress; if Nancy marries and gets a sharp husband, and three or four children, that'll bring her to her senses, and if she goes out as lady's maid, as she is always wanting to do, by the time she has been soaked to her skin, and had her inside jumbled out on a dickey, as I see my lady's maid, she'll wish herself back here looking after chickens and ducks at Old Farm. But, sir, my worst sore is Thomas, who you

were so very kind to, and promoted to be teacher, and almost the head of your school; to be sure he does read almost as well as a parson, saving your reverence, to whom I meant no offence; and I did look, that if Hopkins, who is in years like myself, dropt, he might, through your favour, sir, have succeeded him both in school and desk; but, God bless your reverence, he would not have it, if it was offered him. No, no! he'll have nothing but a place at court, or about some public office, and he is always teasing me to ask my lord. I tells him I might ask his lordship for an exciseman's place, and in time he might get to be a supervisor, but that won't do for my gentleman, for such he would be, he must have some'at to live in Lunnon; he helps to turn his sister's head, for he lets her read some of his books, he has got one, the *Family Library*, I am sure he had better read the Family Bible, that will teach him to be obedient to his father as Isaac was; but would you believe it, sir, when I have read my chapter, which, thank God, I am able to do to my family every night, as well as the evening prayer; we no sooner gets up from our knees, but up comes my jackanapes, with, 'Father, how do you *prove* s o and so?' I always answers him, the *Bible's* the

word of *God* and *His word* must be *true* ; but I wish, sir, if I might be so bold to ask it, you would be pleased to talk to him, he'd, may be, mind your authority more than mine, and you would find out all his nonsense, for there is no end of it. He takes in a book, that idle hound, Tack Clemens, goes round the country with every month, they call il som'at about mechanicals ; and, would you believe it, sir, it was only last week, after thumbing over this book, what does my chap do, but corks up the spout of the tea kettle, I thought he was mending it, and then he puts putty round the lid, and sets it on the fire ; at last comes such a bounce as frightens his poor mother out of her life who thought it was an earthquake, and I jumps up, and thought the roof was coming down ; but it was the kettle burst to pieces, and all the hot water flying about, scalding a cat and two kittens who were lying on the hearth, so that we were obliged to drown them, and my spark only called it a sperament in hydro—, something, I can't remember what, and cared no more for the kettle than if it had been an old shoe ; but when I stops the price of a new one out of his wages, he'll sing another song."

“Perhaps,” said Mr. Morton, willing to soften the matter, “your son has a turn for mechanics, and he might make it advantageous to him if you chose another line for him; all men are not born farmers.”

“True, sir; I fear he is one of that sort, worse luck for me, who am his father; it comes hard upon a parent when his first-born will not stand in his shoes when he is gone, and keep up the family. Why, sir, as you may have heard, Old House Farm was rented by my father, my grandfather, and his father before him, for above a hundred years. It was my grandfather who first began to think of setting up the family: he thought, though posterity had done nothing for him, it was no reason he should do nothing for posterity! So, God rest his soul! he scraped together, and built those houses, Downs, and Hills we live in, that was the waste then, free for any one to build on. My father was a very frugal man, and not burthened with a large family, for it pleased God to take to himself most of his children in their infancy; he built Tomkins’s house, and planted the orchard that now produces the best apples in Common-garden market; that conquest was the pride of his life—Bony was never so happy when he got the

better of kings and emperors as my father when he called that his *own*."

"And you, Blunt," said his rector, "have not impoverished the family property; I think you must have doubled it."

"Why, sir, I was lucky, and when wheat was high, I made a bit something beyond my rent, and I was lucky too in buying up bits of the common when it was enclosed; but then, sir, you must allow it is very cutting to hear Thomas say he shall let, or may be sell, it, when it is his; but there's two words to that bargain, and may be, Master Thomas, you may not have it to sell! those who would live by the plough, must handle the plough, so that if Sam will mind it, and I'll keep him straight from learning, I'll be bound; why he shall have it all."

"But would that be just to your eldest son, Blunt? don't let a little resentment induce you to bring a stain on your own character."

"No, sir, I'd be sorry to do that, but its my own winning, all but what I got from father, and it was won with God's blessing, and the sweat of our brows, and to have it all blown up in a tea kettle, is past human patience."

“ Well but, Blunt, would it not be better, instead of quarrelling with your son about his tastes, to endeavour to turn them to his advantage.”

“ Lord help you, what can come of all his nonsense ? No, sir, nothing but bad will come of it, he’s always talking of one *Intellect*, who is *marching* about, and by all I hear of this chap he is a great rascal, he is just such another as Hunt, or Cobbett, and one Tom Paine, who wanted, I remember to make all the world as wise as himself. And Thomas says—not that I take all his rum stuff for gospel—that he’s told by *Intellect* that in four or five years there’ll be nothing but them railways, and steam-engines, no coach or horse, then to be sure *Intellect* will march, at what my carter, who has served in the Militia, calls “ *double quick time*. ” It’s my mind, sir, though I’m no scholar, that the world will soon be at an end.”

“ What do you judge from, Blunt ? ”

“ Why, sir, if the world be’ent near at an end, I think this country is.”

“ That is narrowing your circle a good deal, farmer, for this country, great as you may think it, is a very small spot in the world ; but I should like to know

why you think so very badly of the state of the country, who must have been, and are, thriving in it ? ”

“ That’s true, sir, but I go from this : my father, who lived and died a good christian, and an honest man, as I am sure your reverence will bear witness, he always said, no man can stand long on his head, his heels must fall somewhere ; and when he used to see things going, as he called it topsy-turvy, why he said the country would have a rumshion to get it right again : now, sir, I call things topsy turvy now, for there’s my Thomas, who ought to be minding the plough, is thinking of nothing but speraments, which might be very pretty amusement for your master Edward ; and then there’s my lord, who, they say, when he goes into foreign parts, stands in the place of the King, and has all the same honours done him ; and my lady, no doubt by the same rule, is just the Queen ; and now in this here place, where she is doubtless much respected, why she plays the lady’s maid, or what not, to please such as we ! if her ladyship had played Queen Elizabeth, or the Queen of Sheba, there would have been some sense in it, and we shou’d have thought her grand, and in her proper place.”

There was so much truth in this observation, that

Mr. Morton felt it dangerous ground to proceed on, and therefore said,

“ Well, Blunt, there is some truth in what you say, but I am rather in haste now, so when opportunity offers, I will talk to your son.”

“ And I must go too, sir, for if Master Intellect gets into my farm-yard, I shall go to rack.”

On his way home, Mr. Morton found food for reflection, in the farmer’s natural good sense, and just observations ; and whilst he rejoiced in the extension of knowledge, as the probable, and apparent, means of extending Christianity over the world, he felt sensibly that “ a little learning is a dangerous thing,” and that the *bouleversem* in the orders of society, from the anxiety each class had to imitate the habits and manners of a superior grade, was destroying the beauty of the whole scale.

He resolved to address his parishioners upon the subject, on the following Sunday ; as he felt fully aware that Farmer Blunt’s family was not the only one that entertained such notions ; though perhaps they were not by any other farmer, so judiciously seen through, and checked.

Emma performed her promise to the little invalid, and, after their drive, she accompanied Lady Tintern into her flower garden and conservatory. They were both equally fond of plants and gardening, Lady Tintern knowing all the newest sorts and rarest specimens ; Emma very skilful in the cultivation of the common kinds ; each was busy, one directing her gardener in the arrangement, the other trimming and tying up some of her favourites, when Lord O'Donnel and his two daughters, the Misses Riley, were announced, and followed by a young man, whom Lord O'Donnel introduced as Mr. Everard Price.

Strangers, and uninvited guests are not always welcome ones, and on this occasion, especially, as Lady Tintern had filled her house, to its utmost accommodation, with her own friends, she was far from pleased by this addition, and as she considered this an *intruder*, she drew rather stiffly back at the presentation. Lord O'Donnel, with his usual undaunted and good humoured manner, said,

“ I believe, Lady Tintern, I have taken a great liberty in bringing my young friend, but his musical talents make him so acceptable every where, I thought

he might be so useful in such a party as this, that I made the girls turn their abigail out of the carriage, and give him her place."

Lady Tintern saw this infliction was inevitable, and therefore bore it as well as she could, only saying,

"I am afraid Mr. Price (is not that his name) will be very badly accommodated, for we are so full, I do not think I can do more for him than get him a room at a farm house."

Any where would do for Mr. *Everard* Price, for so he wrote himself: whether "the Reverend," ought to be added, was doubtful from his dress, which was a dark blue, fashionably made, surtout, a black waistcoat, drab trousers, a black stock, and boots, that, saving the want of spurs, might have done for a hussar or lancer. He was never sorry to be taken for a clergyman, it was a letter of credit, but there were occasions when he was very glad to say he was not *yet* ordained. He belonged in some way or other to Eton College, but he never unnecessarily explained in what way; and he had hopes of preferment in the church, but till this was certain, he took all the advantage possible of being a layman.

After a few exclamations of admiration at the beauty of the conservatory, and wonder at the variety of spring flowers (for Easter was at its latest time this year and the weather mild almost like summer), Lady Tintern begged Emma to do the honours of the flower garden to the Misses Riley, as she was rather tired ; and she would wait for them under the south wall, if Lord O'Donnel would be her companion. He was too happy !

He was one of what are called *Union Lords*, owing his title to the support he gave to that measure, both in, and out of parliament. He was of an ancient Milesian family, and sufficiently proud of that, and being the proprietor of so many thousand acres of bog, and barren land ; that of him it might be said, as of his almost namesake Mac Donald, of Sky, that he would be the richest man in Ireland if he could get two-pence half-penny per acre for his land. But if it did not yield him much profit, it afforded an admirable subject of conversation, his hundreds of tenantry sounded well at a dinner, though in reality they were naked and starving, and the fish of his lakes were inexhaustible *to talk of*, if they were not so easily obtained to eat.

He had all the *tact*, as well as all the *veracity*, of his countrymen ; he had not served government purely *pro amor patriæ* ; he saved the ministers from the Irish curse, for he never let “the grass grow in the road to their houses.” And, besides his title, and his seat in the house of Commons, he had sundry little pickings—a lord lieutenancy of a county, and a little snug sinecure as collector of some duties in the port of Dublin.

But the acquisition of place, like ambition, is apt to “grow on what it feeds,” and he still paid court to, and haunted ministers, and therefore his intimacy with Lord Tintern. But he sometimes paid in kind ; he had a great deal of influence in a very unruly part of the north of Ireland, and he was bold and resolute in carrying into execution any measures thought necessary on this side the water. He lived the greatest part of the year on his domain, much to the discomfort of his daughters ; his only son was pushing his fortune in the army, and was at this time with his regiment in India.

Lord O’Donnel had come over on the meeting of parliament before Christmas, and as there had not been much gaiety going on in town, his daughters had occa-

sionally prevailed on him to go for a few days, either to the Star and Garter on Richmond hill, or to the Sun at Salthill; and at the latter they made Mr. *Everard* Price's acquaintance, he lived in the neighbourhood of Eton, why and wherefore, he did not say, they recollect seeing him at the Opera, and with smartly dressed men, and also at some second rate musical parties, his singing was excellent, and his knowledge of music great; and, in return for assisting the Misses Riley in their duets and trios, they were spoiling him with all their might.

Lord O'Donnell represented him to Lady Tintern, as “a young man who had distinguished himself at Eton, and had expectations (*anglicè*) *hopes* of getting a stall (minor of course) in some cathedral; he had so anxiously wished to be presented to a person of Lord Tintern's influence, and was himself so acceptable in society from his talents, Lord O'Donnell could not resist bringing him, and again implored Lady Tintern's forgiveness for having taken such an unwarrantable liberty.”

When a thing is past remedy, it is wisest to bear it, as well as one can. Lady Tintern was not a person

to turn her back on a *useful* guest, though he was intruded on her, and Lord O'Donnell amused, and was rather a favourite with, her, so she suffered herself to be appeased, and determined that the Misses Riley and their protégé should do their part in entertaining the friends she was collecting.

The party returned from their walk before Lord O'Donnell had exhausted all the charming sallies with which he meant to lull Lady Tintern's ear: the walkers were liberal in all the epithets of lovely, beautiful, enchanting, on the flower garden and shrubbery; as they passed through the conservatory, Mr. Price, who was in full feather at the success of his introduction, said,

“ What a capital room for music is this conservatory! do let us try *La mia spada*, without accompaniment.”

Lady Tintern could not object, especially as she wanted to be sure what the performance would be. It was such as even to satisfy her, Emma was delighted, and looked forward to the evening with unusual pleasure.

The trio was not quite ended, when the first dinner .

bell rang, and they immediately entered the house. Lady Tintern ordered a servant to shew Mr. Price the short way to the Stewart Lodge, and take his things there.

CHAPTER X.

THE complacency with which Lady Anne had, on the preceding evening, received the gross flattery of the Count, had raised in him the most sanguine hopes of success, and so determined was he to push his cause, by every effort, that he retired to his toilette earlier than usual: but alas! the best concerted plans are often disturbed, if not destroyed by a trifle—in the last finish to his dress a strap broke, his servant was slow, as he thought, and awkward in adjusting it; so much time was lost in accusation and defence, that to his unutterable dismay, when he entered the drawing-room, Lady Anne was actually on Lord Tintern's arm,

and the unfortunate Count doomed to conduct the eldest Miss Riley ; he was thrown so off his guard by this second disappointment, he scarcely heeded the lady committed to his charge, till, by an adroit manœuvre, he contrived to get the next seat to Lady Anne ; I can *talk* to her, said he to himself, for Tintern will be too much taken up with his duty, as host, to attend much to his fair neighbour. But Lady Anne was not in the same humour as last night—she would talk to Lord Tintern, and not listen to the Count ; and on the other side Miss Riley was determined he should not neglect *her*. She had been educated *en pension* in France, spoke the language fluently, and, like most English that do so, made it an excuse for saying ten times as much, and fifty times as many silly things, as would have done in their own language.

The French pique themselves on their language being more adapted than any other for conversation, it certainly abounds in small words and piquant expressions, suited to what is called *small talk* ; but if it is small in matter, it is abundant in words. Of this latter quality, the Count's neighbour made such full use she hardly gave him time to eat, and rather tired and

bored by *listening*, a quality his countrymen are not in the habit of cultivating. He turned suddenly to Lady Anne, and implored her to let Lord Tintern help her to some pig.

“It was so *susceptible*, or he would not have recommended it to her ladyship.”

Throwing herself back in her chair, Lady Anne exclaimed, “What, under heaven, can you mean by a *susceptible pig*?” and bursting into a more violent fit of boisterous laughter than any woman beyond the vulgar, excepting one of the highest rank and fashion, had dared to indulge in, she called on the poor Count for an explanation, the laugh was catching, even where the joke was not heard. The Count looked as if he had committed a crime, his very *toupée* standing upright with alarm: when the mirth had a little subsided and the servants had composed the muscles of their faces, he was called on to explain; afraid at first to trust himself again in English, he said he meant the pig was *tendre*, or he believed *touchy* was the word.

No misnomer could have been more unfortunate for himself, it admitted of such constant allusion and play upon the word; and Lady Anne was so merciless,

in the exercise of her wit on the occasion ; that when the company in the evening, as usual, divided into small parties, the discomfited Count refused both whist and ecarté, and took refuge in a retired corner of the room, and challenged Mrs. De Cameron to a game at chess.

Lady Anne played ecarté whilst the elderlies were at whist, and the men gathered round her, and betted. The Misses Riley and their protégé took possession of the piano forte. Lady Tintern had her work-table, and employed Emma to draw a pattern for her ; they had not been long seated when Lord John seceded from the ecarté to the work-table, and placed himself *not* opposite to Emma, but obliquely, so that he had a constant view of her, whilst she only saw him when her head was raised from her employment ; he rested his elbow on his knee, and his head on his hand, which brought him still more on a level, or rather below her.

It is inconceivable to those who have not studied such matters, what importance there is in *position* : what would be nothing, said with the stiffness of '*attention*,' at a drill, melts quite into the tender, and steals softly on the ear, when brought into such contact as we have described, with the person to whom it is addressed.

“ How wonderfully those good folks are exerting their voices for us unwise listeners,” said he, “ pity they have not a cathedral, and a congregation for their scene.”

“ It is delightful any where,” said Emma, “ and I am sure we are much obliged to them.”

“ You are fond then of music ? ”

At this moment Lady Tintern was called on to settle a knotty point at the whist table ; and to Emma’s answering,

“ Oh yes ! I doat on it, don’t you like it, my Lord ? ”

“ Not *that* Pasta and Curioni screaming,” he replied, “ but if I could again hear the delicious air of *El Pajarito*, on the guitar, that I heard this morning, *I* should doat on that.”

Emma felt the colour mount in her cheeks, but by holding her head lower down over her occupation, her long ringlets fell so over her face, that she did not see that Lord John’s eyes were rivetted on her countenance ; it may be, she *suspected* they were so, and therefore did not look up. We cannot take upon ourselves to determine such nice points, such scenes have so long passed away from our remembrance, that we are afraid of misleading our young readers.

Emma went on with her tracing, but it was evident with no very steady hand ; and, after some pause, seeing her determined not to reply to his observation, Lord John said,

“ Have you any idea *who* in this house plays the guitar ? and so exquisitely !! ”

“ I believe,” she replied, without raising her head, “ Lady Tintern does.”

“ It was not Lady Tintern’s strains that *I* heard, I know she was at that time in the theatre, it was a *young* voice, and the whole thing was so perfectly Spanish, I thought myself again in the spicy groves of Estramadura : were you ever in Spain, Miss Legh ? ”

“ No, never.”

“ How you, with your exquisite taste for the beauties of nature, and your love of music would enjoy their moonlight evenings ! Whoever it was that I heard must have been there, as it is impossible otherwise to catch their pathos and enthusiasm. I would give the universe to know who it was.”

Seeing Lady Tintern returning to her work-table, Emma hoping this conversation, which was growing very painful to her, would end, said,

“I dare say Lady Tintern can tell you.”

But she said this with a doubtful, timid tone of voice, that showed the expectation was not quite sincere.

Lady Tintern, though she had left the table, was not an inattentive observer of what seemed going on there, and, though she could not hear what Lord John said, his manner was so devoted, and Emma’s so shy, she almost fancied the important declaration had been made; when she resumed her seat, Emma regained some of her composure, when Lord John said,

“Miss Legh refers me to you, Lady Tintern, to satisfy my curiosity as to *who* the person was, I heard singing to a guitar this morning: I know it could not be you, for I saw you elsewhere.”

Lady Tintern declared she was “quite ignorant of any one but herself playing the guitar, and she certainly had not touched her’s that day; it must be Lady Anne’s harp.”

“Impossible! Lady Anne might have all the masters in the known world, and play every hour of her life, but she would never arrive at any thing so simple, so pathetic, and so truly Spanish!”

Lady Tintern guessed the whole, but Emma had made her escape, under pretence of getting a fresh pencil, and slid toward the instrument to listen.

Miss Riley asked her if she sang and played ? she replied, “ Oh no, excepting to amuse my father, and lull him to sleep, but Lady Anne Lawton does both, and, I believe, excels.”

Wanting a little rest, the singers begged Lady Tintern would prevail on Lady Anne to sing ; she was in the height of success with her *ecarté* and her *bets*, and, at first, would not hear of being interrupted, but after a little coquetry, which she always practised on such occasions, she suffered herself to be persuaded to try her harp ; she did not *play* well, but she *looked* gracefully, had studied her attitudes before a glass, and her fine commanding figure appeared to advantage, so that if she suspected ears might not be charmed, she hoped eyes would be so.

Whilst this was arranging, Lord John drew again near Emma, and, in his usual subdued tone, said,

“ Have you any idea who that pigeon is, that those girls are plucking ? ”

“ No, indeed ! but what can you mean by calling

him a pigeon? you might have applied that epithet to some of those round the *ecarlé* table, though it would have been rather too severe."

"I own it was an absurd observation, but he gave me the idea of a 'pigeon-winged head' in Ansty's Bath Guide; but I will maintain in the more obvious sense you have taken it, they are *pigeoning* him by making all they can out of his lungs. Do you know if he is a professional man? I think I have seen that odd phiz of his somewhere."

Though these observations were made in a sort of whisper, Lord John would, without any scruple, have said it all aloud, but as he did not, it served to confirm Lady Tintern's impression of the nature of his conversation.

Lady Anne quavered and flourished to the utmost of her power, and Mr. *Everard* Price could not help adding, now and then a few notes as second, a piece of impertinence she would have highly resented, had she not felt at the moment her voice would not reach the upper C; and, as the song was applauded, she felt obliged rather than offended, by the liberty, and pleased by the assistance; she therefore desired

he might be introduced to her ; he had always flattering speeches ready cut and dried for all occasions, when his interest required their use ; and to Lady Anne he so well applied them, that she proposed a little practice after breakfast next morning, which was readily agreed to by the other musical ladies.

“ Do you mean to patronize this rehearsal of squalling ? ” said Lord John to Emma, “ or shall *you* try and listen to the more enchanting sounds of the guitar ? ”

“ Probably neither one nor the other,” replied Emma, “ I shall be employed in reading to a little invalid.”

“ Then,” returned, he “ I shall go as far as I can out of hearing of Lady Anne and Co.”

When the party broke up, as Lady Tintern was going to her dressing room, she invited Emma into it, saying,

“ My dear Miss Legh, I don’t mean to be impertinent, but you are now under my protection, and, having no parent here, I must, in virtue of my being in their place, ask you, has Lord John been making a proposal to you ? ”

Emma's look of unfeigned astonishment answered the question before her unembarrassed reply of "Oh, dear no! how could your ladyship have such an idea?"

"Nay, my dear, that was not at all extraordinary, from the way he has been whispering in your ear all the evening; don't think me a severe, hard-hearted wretch, if I ask still farther, has he been making love to you?"

"No! no! I assure you," replied Emma, "I rather think he has been quizzing me, for I must own my transgression to you, Lady Tintern, whilst I was alone in your boudoir this morning, I was tempted to touch your guitar: pray forgive me, but the sight of it brought so many happy hours to my recollection, for, several years ago, when I was staying with my aunt Johnson at Brompton, I learned to play a little on the guitar, and a very little Spanish also, from an amiable and interesting refugee, and it was one of her favourite airs I was trying to recollect, but I will never touch your guitar again, and do kindly forgive me for having done it to-day."

"You are a dear, good, little girl," said Lady Tintern kissing her cheek, "you want no pardon for

touching my guitar, do so as often as you like, only don't do so when Lord John can hear you ; he is a romantic young man, and, though he means no harm by you, the more you keep out of his way the better ; I will assist you to do so, for I do not like he should make you an object of observation to the rest of the party by his admiration."

" Oh, do not call it *admiration*, dearest Lady Tintern, you had better call it *persecution*."

Lady Tintern smiled at the simplicity and earnestness with which this was said, but as she wished Emma good night, the latter burst into tears.

" What is the matter, my dear," said Lady Tintern, in a most tender and feeling voice, " are you unhappy ? "

" No indeed, Madam, I have every thing to make me happy—only—Lord John will—"

" What my dear ? "

" Nothing ma'am, only—talk to me."

" Well, I will try what I can do for you," said Lady Tintern soothingly, " don't be distressed at what half your sex would be delighted with—attentions, even though they mean nothing are seldom unacceptable, but I quite understand your feelings, and I recommend you

to turn your thoughts and attention to other people and things ; only consider Lord John as a fly, who will buzz about you as long as he stays, brush him gently off, that is the best way, and not to make any fuss, as if you were plagued by it, because that would give it a zest, and make him more anxious to overcome your indifference ; these men, my dear, and particularly those who are *recherché*, as he considers himself, have a craving vanity that is always searching for food ; but it is too late to moralise, good night, and pleasant dreams ; but, remember, I shall expect you to be very open and sincere with me, as you have hitherto been, and I will do all I can that you shall not be *teased*." On this word Lady Tintern laid a strong emphasis as Emma closed the door.

When in her own room she indulged in a plentiful shower of tears. How strange ! said she to herself, it is, that what Lady Tintern says other girls would like should make me *miserable* ! Why cannot I like all the flattering things Lord John says, and does ; but they make me uncomfortable. I wish I could ask any one the cause of this ; I am sure Sophy Graham could explain it, she is so clever. Lord John is most agreeable, that I must allow ; indeed young men of his rank

seem all of them to have such gentle manners ; such a delicate and refined way of saying, and doing, every thing. Oh, how unlike the young men my father asks to his house—it will be difficult to endure *them* when I go back ; there are several here that I should like to know better, Mr. Duprée particularly ; but Lord John always comes in the way whenever he is going to speak to me, he must be my *evil genius* ; and, come to that determination, Emma sought her pillow :—over that neither her *evil genius* hovered, nor under it a *Cobra de Capella* hid.

There is a feeling of pleasure, or rather of satisfaction, in all minds at having, on however trifling an occasion come to a decision, and more especially this is the case with the young, to whom decision is generally a new feeling. Emma had decided in her own mind that young men of fashion are infinitely superior in their manners, and possess in a much greater degree the art of pleasing, than those of a lower grade, even if the latter they have received what is called a good education ; but that they are infinitely more dangerous. At this moment Emma did not venture to carry the definition farther, or the comparison to individuals, it was only the class she thought so well of.

CHAPTER XI.

THE following morning a fresh disappointment awaited Lady Tintern. Mr. Fermor arrived, as he had promised, to breakfast; but brought word that his friends Clifton and Guise were both ordered on guard at the Tower, and it would be impossible for them to fulfil their promise as performers in the Stoke Park theatricals. Lady Tintern was in despair—wished, a thousand and a thousand times, either that she had never attempted the thing, or that the Tower had sunk into the Thames.

“Oh men! you are deceivers ever!” she exclaimed. But Lady Anne was so eager for London news, she would not let Lady Tintern’s lamentation be heard:

when her curiosity was satisfied, Mr. Fermor finding the absence of his friends was so inconvenient, suggested a remedy, saying,

“Oh, Lady Tintern, you may easily replace Guise, and Clifton ; the Coldstream, which was brigaded with ours in Portugal, joined in all our theatricals, and the *Critic* was a favourite piece with us, and if Lord Tintern will lend me a nag to ride over to Windsor, where there’s a company of them, I’ll be bound to get as many as you want.”

This offer was thankfully accepted, and at luncheon-time he returned with Captain Coulson, and Mr. Falkner, whom he presented to Lady Tintern as such capital actors, that she regretted she had not pressed more of their corps into her service. On calling over the characters, Captain Coulson offered a capital beef-eater in a serjeant of theirs, and their assistant-surgeon would do almost any character in the piece, or two if required ; these were readily accepted, and Lady Tintern was not sorry to hear that neither of the two last could come till just in time for the performance.

Lady Tintern pressed her new friends to dinner, which they accepted, and added permission to them

to invite any brother officers they pleased to the performance, well knowing that nothing keeps young ladies in better humour than plenty of beaux, and above all guardsmen.

During luncheon, Mr. Everard Price mentioned “that Gray the poet was buried in the church of Stoke, and that there was a fair presumption that his *Elegy in a Country Church Yard* might have been written there, and his ode on Eton College, suggested, though not written there. As Poetry and Music are sister arts, the professors of the latter generally make pretensions to the former ; the Misses Riley were enthusiastic *lovers* of poetry, though they would not own to any thing more,—but it would be so delightful to hear those beautiful poems read on the spot that inspired them. A party was therefore arranged to walk there, and Mr. Everard Price was requested to take Gray’s poems in his pocket. Emma was delighted at this proposal, and asked Lady Tintern if she recommended her joining the party ?

“ By all means,” she replied, “ for I saw Lord John’s horses waiting ; so he rides, I suppose, with Lady Anne, who never walks, but in Kensington

Gardens: if he should change his mind, which I do not think she will allow him to do if she wants him, you must keep with the Misses Riley; they are his aversion, and their protégé his abhorrence. I do not recommend you to the chaperonage of Mrs. De Cameron, for she will be too much engrossed by criticism, to attend you."

Lady Tintern had another motive for this last piece of advice, which she did not communicate to Emma; she knew Mrs. De Cameron would, if possible, tire her, and unfit her for the evening performance: but she only charged her not to over fatigue herself with walking.

Lady Anne, when she heard this party proposed, felt sure Emma would be of it, and Lord John, too; so, to spoil this plan, she condescended to press him into her service, saying,

“Lord John, I am sure your conscience must often repreach you for the brutal part you acted towards me when we crossed Langford brook; if I had not been the best tempered, and most forgiving creature in the world, I should never have spoken to you again; but now I will give you an opportunity to make the *amende*

honorable: you shall protect me from all the King's beasts and birds. I am going to Sand-pit gate to see them, I won't be refused, don't attempt it. Papa and Lord Tintern are going to visit somebody at Englefield Green; I shall lend my second horse to Fermor, and I cannot go there *tête a tête* with him, so you must be my chaperon."

Lord John yielded to her volubility, but without any intention of being the proposed chaperon, and on Mr. Fitz-Gibbon offering his services in that capacity, and the two guards' officers as privileged people, beginning to be her ladyship's escort. Lord John mounted his horse, and rode in another direction.

The walkers set off, and Emma congratulated herself in having entirely escaped Lord John, when, stopping to look at a fine view of Windsor Castle, and Eton, which Mr. *Everard* (as he wished to be called, dropping Price,) was pointing out, and explaining, She was startled by Lord John's voice in her ear.

" You, I see, are a blue, Miss Legh!"

" Oh, no! I assure you I have not the smallest pretensions to it—how could you think so?"

" Because you are of this wise and critical party."

“Indeed I am of it, very much for the pleasure of the walk, though I own I shall like to hear some passages in Gray’s beautiful poem, illustrated by the scenery by which it was suggested.”

“Then you are poetical, only you will not confess it?”

“Not in the least, but I always like information,” she replied.

“And what sort of information do you expect from that pretty little *delitanti coxcomb*?”

“Oh, he is not quite so bad as you think him, he seems to know a great deal.”

“He pretends to,” said Lord John, “but if he pleases you, and I beg your pardon for any thing I have said against him, he will in that case be a subject of *envy* to me, rather than of *contempt*.”

“Oh dear!” said Emina, laughing, “how can you suppose it possible for me to like or dislike any body I have scarcely spoken to? I may, I hope, like his singing without going any farther, or doing anything wrong.”

“Far be it from me to say that *you* ever can do wrong. I may lament, but I never can arraign your judgment—would I sing!”

“

The solemnity with which this wish was uttered made Emma laugh; but though she did so, she felt the conversation was taking so pointed a turn, that Lady Tintern's injunctions came forcibly to her mind, and she also perceived that Lord John had slackened his pace so that they were *tête a tête* and behind the rest of the party; this quite distressed her, but fortunately a brook checked the progress of the rest of the party; some contrivance was necessary to cross it at all, and then it could only be singly—so that in a few minutes Emma and her companion mingled with the rest of the party; when they did so, Count Dunois was standing on a large stone in the middle of the brook, assisting the ladies one by one over it; but Lord John's activity enabled him to assist Emma without her being much indebted to the Count.

“Well!” exclaimed Mrs. De Cameron, who was just then out of humour with the Count, for not approving of Johnson's criticism on Gray. “How unlucky we were not to have Lord John here at first, it would have saved us a great deal of trouble, and wet shoes also, but I suppose he was conductin' Miss Legh over some asses-bridge his imagination hath ~~had~~.”

Lord John held Mrs. De Cameron in too great contempt to answer her, excepting by a low, solemn bow, and turning to Emma, he said,

“I hope I shall not undergo persecution without the reward of feeling that one lady, at least, will not be in danger of getting cold.”

Emma felt all the delicacy of this reply, and walked on, in compact with the rest of the party, till they came to the church-yard, which was surrounded by such a wall as country church-yards usually are, and which was much higher on the outer side, than on the inner.

The sexton’s cottage was enquired for, and his wife came out, but she could not give the key of the gate. Wilson, the carpenter, was at my Lord’s putting up a play house, and had it in his pocket. This difficulty was at last obviated by the gentlemen removing a few stones, of a heap that was against the wall, and forming some steps, by which the party easily mounted, and walking a few yards on the top of the wall, got as easily down by a tomb-stone. Lord John kept undeviatingly to ~~J~~ ^{the} though Mrs. De Cameron gave him a ^{word} that she, from her greater

weight, required far more assistance than younger Ladies.

The party having seated themselves in a group on some adjoining tombstones, and requested Mr. *Everard Price* to give them the Poems, the Ode ‘on a distant view of Eton College’ was the first read; but previously, Mr. Price pointed out the different scenes that were alluded to in the poem. He read, or rather recited, with the important air of a school-boy, declaiming “Ye distant spires, &c.”

At one end of the same stone, sat Miss *Amelia Riley* and Mr. *Duprée*, and at the other, *Emma*, with *Lord John* reclining behind her, so that he had the command of her ear, without *Mrs. De Cameron*, who was the person from whose observation he wished to escape, knowing when he addressed *Emma*; when Mr. Price came to the line

‘And catch a fearful joy.’

Lord John said in a low tone, “how that describes my present position!”

Emma made no answer. When was read,

‘The sunsh... of the breast.’

He added, “may y...ducti... Legh, ever, as now, enjoy that, however deeply...”

Emma still affected only to listen to the ode: but it was evident to Lord John that she did so with a palpitating heart; he therefore continued, and approaching still nearer to her ear, repeated after the reader,

“Thought *does* destroy *my* paradise.”

Emma's change of countenance showed how well she understood the force of his allusion, but she made no reply to any of his observations; though, if she had been closely observed, perhaps her silence would not have been unintelligible, but she turned her face from her persecutor.

After the usual proportion of applause, that was, as a matter of course, bestowed on the manner in which the ode was recited, and the sense of the author improved; a good deal of coquetting on the part of the performer took place, before he was prevailed on to give them the Elegy also.

Emma's mind was too much occupied by her position, which she felt it impossible to change, and by her neighbour also, and to the poem as she wished; she was thinking how she could escape

from Lord John's perseverance ; she was still inclined to call it *persecution*, flattering as it was. And she was puzzled what account she could give to Lady Tintern, whose advice and directions she seemed to be so little attending to—but how could she help it ? So thoroughly absorbed was she by these ideas, and so agitated at the same time, that she only imperfectly heard some of the last lines he repeated.

But she had made up her mind, and like most timid and inexperienced persons on a difficult occasion, she prepared to do the worst in her power, to the best of her judgment, that was, in a *most decided* way, to avoid Lord John during the rest of the walk, and give him no other possible opportunity of speaking to her. Had she formed, and persevered in, this resolution in the beginning of the walk, it had been well ; but after all she had been listening to—what would be Lord John's interpretation of this conduct ? and how would he bear it ? this she did not think of.

As soon as the ~~eleven~~ was finished Mrs. De Cagneron reminded the party that it was ~~more~~ ^{able} than prudential to avoid all its ill consequences.

get over the wall in the same way as before, only that going down on the stones was more perilous than going up. Emma, by a manœuvre, for which she gave herself great credit, turned round (when it was her turn to go down, under pretence of speaking to Miss Riley), and just when Lord John's hand was held out to assist her, by which means his fell to Miss Amelia Riley's, and Mr. Duprée's to Emma, who soon saw with alarm the effect of this little artifice on Lord John, his change of countenance almost startled her ; but, after the first moment of surprise, at his being so angry, she applauded herself for her resolution, and determined to follow it up, by keeping so in the midst of the party that he never got near her till they reached the door of the house, where he placed himself so that she could not avoid him ; when he said,

“ For pity's sake, Miss Legh, tell me what I have done to offend you.”

Emma summoned up all her fortitude, and said in as firm a voice, and as cold an accent, as she could assume, “ Nothing, my ‘ ‘ and pass ‘ ‘ n.

That he was wr^{ry} and ^{try} ok no pains to con-
ceal ; and ^{try} Emma's feelings they

would prove anything but happy, the effort she had made had cost her much ; but there was a degree of self-deception about her, arising partly from the innocence of her own heart, and partly from her ignorance of the workings of others, that made her fancy that the more angry she made Lord John, and the more she mortified her own feelings, the surer she was that her conduct was *right* ; and we must allow her the merit, under this impression, of determining to appear gay and happy, if she did not feel so ; luckily for her, Lady Tintern was so occupied by her own concerns, she had no time to call on Emma for an account of her walk. She knew Lord John joined the party, but it was composed of several persons ; if Emma was a tolerable manager, she might keep him from any particularity of conduct ; she could not attend to every thing, she had given Emma all the caution and advice in her power, if she would not mind her, she must take the consequence, and get a little heart-wounded.

